Commentary
April 2005

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Terry Teachout

"Americanism—and Its Enemies" *David Gelernter & Critics*

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Commentary

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COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly (except for a combined July-August issue) by the American Jewish Committee. EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022. Telephone: (212) 891-1400. Fax: (212) 891-6700. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Letters intended for publication may be edited. Single copy is $4.50; $45 a year, 2 years $79, 3 years $109. Add $11.00 per year for subscriptions to Canada and Mexico, $19.00 for all other foreign destinations. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022. Copyright © 2005 by the American Jewish Committee; all rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions. Indexed in *Reader's Guide*, *Book Review Digest*, and elsewhere. U.S. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors Inc., 1130 Cleveland Rd., Sandusky, OH 44870. Printed in the U.S.A. All back issues are available in electronic form at www.commentarymagazine.com.

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Commentary
April 2005

Letters from Readers

Americanism

To the Editor:

David Gelernter's article contains many interesting quotations, but it fails utterly to make the case for Americanism as the successor to the culture of the Puritans ["Americanism—and Its Enemies," January]. Mr. Gelernter's chief error is to mistake religion for religiosity.

Leaders throughout history have larded their pronouncements with references to God, destiny, and history itself. There is no comparable rhetorical device for adding gravity to a message. Lincoln did it, but so did Gladstone, Clemenceau, Napoleon III, Bismarck, both Kaiser Wilhelms, Lloyd George, Garibaldi, and others. World War I saw an explosion of religiosity on all sides, with soldiers of the Imperial German Army marching to battle wearing buttons engraved with the slogan "*Gott Mit Uns*."

The difference between America and the rest of the West is that America is a latecomer to the game and is still full of the optimism and self-confidence that has been knocked out of the European nations. With an almost uninterrupted string of successes behind it, the U.S. finds it easier to believe that God is with it than do countries that have seen their God-given destinies crumble into ruin.

Puritanism has a successor that has played the decisive role in shaping America—but it is commerce, not God. As Calvin Coolidge said, "The business of America is business." We are the world's superpower because the spectacular success of our commercial system gives us the resources that other nations lack. The might of our economy makes the world our stage, and we play upon it because the lure of the footlights is irresistible.

Max Davies
Celebration, Florida

To the Editor:

David Gelernter's essay is a persuasive exposition of the Bible's influence on the evolution of the American ethos, but it suffers from a number of shortcomings.

The first is a glaring absence of any substantive critique of the "anti-Americanism" Mr. Gelernter bemoans. While no reasonable or humane person would champion Islamist terrorists, there are nevertheless valid reasons why a genuine advocate of democracy and equality might be suspicious of America's newfound missionary zeal in the Middle East. One need only think of the American or American-sponsored interventions in Iran, Southeast Asia, and Latin America that overthrew democratically-elected governments and left millions of innocent people dead. One might also cite the current Bush administration's continued support for openly dictatorial regimes like Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Gelernter also does not offer a critique of the pernicious idea of "chosenness." Chosenness has had a disastrous track record ever since the Israelites were ordered by God to purge Canaan of its indigenous people. In later times, chosenness inspired the genocide of the indigenous peoples of the Americas and produced the largest body count in human history.

Western Europeans now have a more evolved view of democracy than Americans. They have seen, correctly, that God is part of the problem—especially when humans have the conceit that they are doing His will.

Todd Wiggins
Paris, France

To the Editor:

By presenting the Puritans as the forerunners of Americanism, David Gelernter manages to show just why people should look askance at America. The Puritans were the sect that destroyed centuries' worth of religious art in England

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during the English Civil War, that claimed that Baptists and Quakers were witches, that beat and exiled dissenters in their New-World colony, and that saw only themselves as elect and eligible to enter heaven. I would not want to see my country led astray by their demonic ideas, which are echoed today by the theocratic Right that would rid us of the Constitution.

If there is a model of Americanism, it is found in the Constitution of the United States. Though perhaps imperfect, that document is what built an America that people could admire. If we go back to it, we might reconstruct an America that, rather than boasting, would be an example from which others would gladly borrow.

CHRISTOPHER BLACKWELL
Deming, New Mexico

TO THE EDITOR:

I cherish America's common religious heritage for its capacity to foster spirituality, but Mr. Gelernter's claim that religion has fostered freedom, equality, and democracy is simply preposterous.

Religion imposes the rule of sacredness, of the unquestionable. If you cannot question, you are anything but free. Equality is even less compatible with religion, which always favors its adherents. Finally, democracy resulted from the decline of the authority of the clergy, and one of its hallmarks is to protect civil society from religious discrimination by means of the separation of church and state.

George W. Bush's onslaught against democratic principles is harming America's moral leadership. The attacks of 9/11 blinded America, not us world citizens. We used to look up to America as the guarantor of democratic principles. Today we feel orphaned and betrayed.

During a visit to the U.S. this past summer, I was surprised to hear one of my American friends remark that all Europeans hated Americans. I was dumbfounded. Where on earth does this myth originate? European hatred of America's hegemonic policies is not the same as hating Americans. Maybe the U.S. is turning out to be like Israel, whose citizens are convinced that they are chronic victims of a supposedly heinous outside world. Self-proclaimed or institutionalized victims often fail to see how arrogant and self-righteous they become, thus blocking the way to realistic solutions.

ERIC LAUREYS
Antwerp, Belgium

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter's assertion that Americanism is based on religious beliefs flies in the face of the secular thought of America's founding fathers. The Bill of Rights and the concept of separation of powers, for example, did not originate in any religious tract or in the Bible. Indeed, where in traditional, organized religion is there any suggestion that democracy is necessary for human existence? From Luther's denunciation of the Swabian peasants to the present-day statements of many of America's religious leaders, the Bible has been used to justify anything but a democratic society.

The fact that America was founded on a secular ideology does not denigrate the role that religion has played in American history and the influence it has had on many Americans. Franklin D. Roosevelt was profoundly influenced by his religious beliefs, and his convictions made him a great leader. But to suggest that Roosevelt's political ideology was based on the Bible would be wrong.

Over the past several years, detailed biographies of many of the founding fathers have been published. What emerges from these books is that they relied heavily on reason and experience. Not all of their decisions proved wise—failing to outlaw slavery, for example—but they understood that it was the responsibility of free, thinking individuals to make rational choices to ensure that society functions properly and fairly. That, simply put, is the essence of secularism.

ELLIOT S. ISAAC
Phoenix, Arizona

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter writes that "today's radical Islam is a religion of death, a religion that rejoices in slaughter. The radical Christianity known as Puritanism insisted on choosing life. Americanism does, too."

What planet is Mr. Gelernter living on? The body counts in Iraq now stand at well over 100,000 Iraqis to 1,500 Americans, not to mention the tens of thousands of Afghans who lost their lives in 2001. All to bring freedom, equality, and democracy to the Middle East? I think not.

Mr. Gelernter's Americanism has far more to do with securing oil reserves for Americans than with bringing democracy to a backward region. After the American Civil War, when the doctrine of Manifest Destiny and the Westward, Ho! movement led to the slaughter of more than 13 million Indians, it was all about a land grab.

I will accept Mr. Gelernter's premise that Americanism is a transformed Puritanism—that is, another form of a virulent religion called Christianity.

CHRIS SEYMOUR
Toronto, Canada

TO THE EDITOR:

Absent from David Gelernter's article is any Weberian economic analysis, which might have shown how Puritanism's notion of an individual's "calling" led to capitalist expansion. If success in a mundane calling was seen as proof of God's favor, then it was easy to draw the conclusion (conscious or unconscious) that economically-backward peoples and their countries were despised by God or could be treated chauvinistically.

Indeed, I would say that American capitalism, rationalized and regimented into corporatism, has become the new Puritanism, and that economic exploitation is a more defining characteristic of our national soul than freedom, equality, or democracy.

Humanitarian decency is expressed only in the radical and unconditional liberalism of someone like Jesus—his concern for the poor and his love for enemies. Americanism is the antithesis of such true godliness.

TIM BUCK
Jonesboro, Arkansas

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter's essay is provocative in many ways, not least in the fact that his

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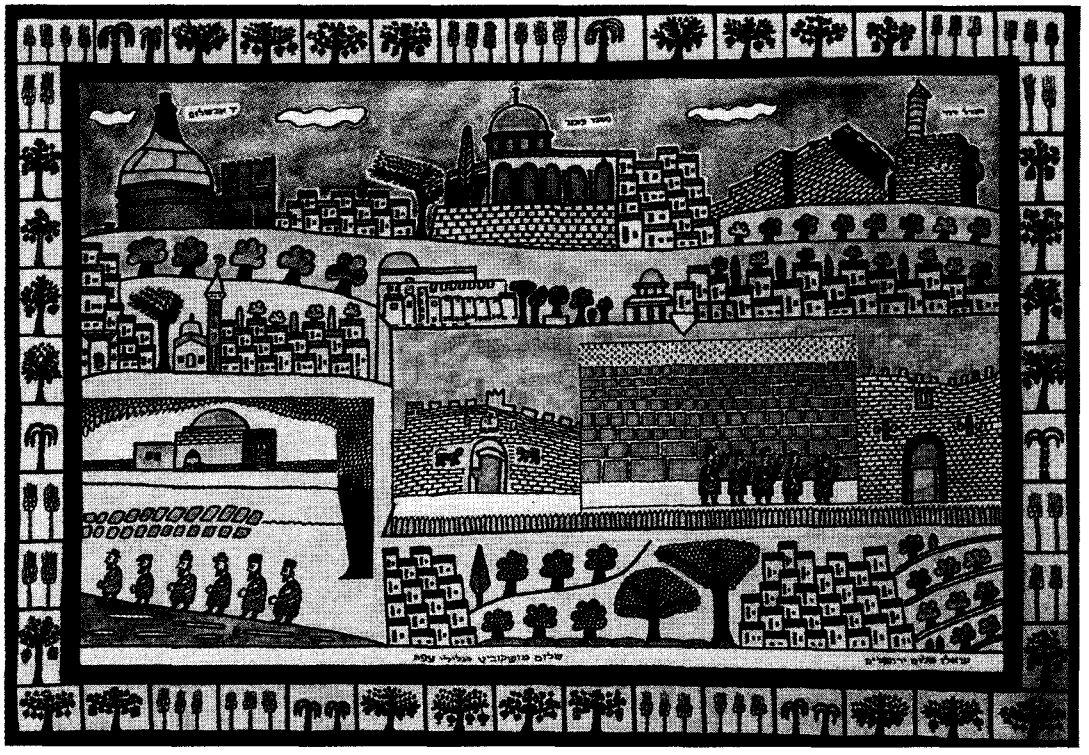

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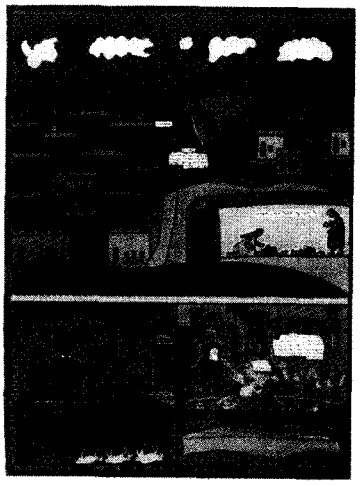

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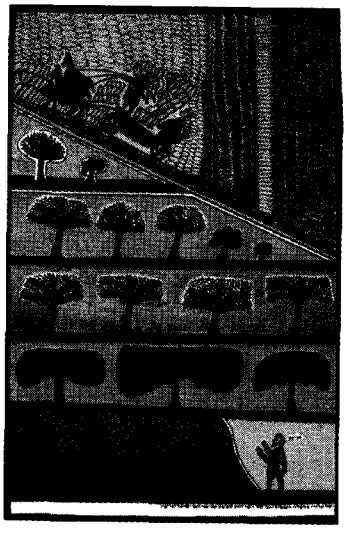

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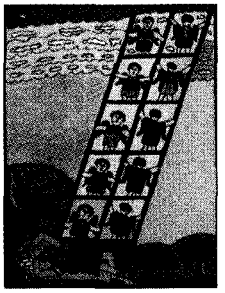

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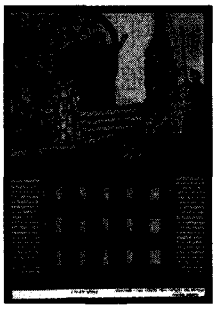

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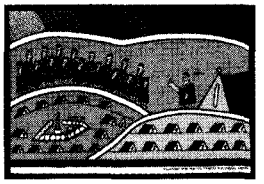

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abridged history of Puritanism and American Christianity does not mention "Jesus" or "Christ" even once. May I respectfully suggest that Mr. Gelernter's essay might have profited from attention to the role this somewhat central figure in Christianity played in American religious history?

MATTHEW ROSE
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR:

Since I have participated in the debate on Americanism and its enemies in my own writing, I turned to David Gelernter's article with great interest. Invariably, I find myself nodding in agreement when I read his sterling essays in COMMENTARY and elsewhere. But this time I must register a demurral. After making his compelling case for the role of religious ideas in the principles of Americanism, Mr. Gelernter draws the conclusion that "every human being everywhere is entitled to freedom, equality, and democracy."

I found this comment jarring. Are not freedom and democracy conditions that are earned? Are Sudanese militiamen or Hutu killers *entitled* to democracy? Does Mr. Gelernter's remark merely reflect excessive exuberance for our exceptional nation and the conditions we enjoy, or is there a more serious point?

I certainly agree with Mr. Gelernter that "freedom, equality, and democracy are right not only for France and Spain but for Afghanistan and Iraq." But "right" does not suggest entitlement. Generations fought to defend the American creed; it did not emerge spontaneously. Benjamin Franklin's admonition—"a republic, if you can keep it"—applies also to freedom and democracy. I am afraid that the danger we face in the future is a complacent America convinced that we are entitled to freedom but unwilling to defend it.

HERB LONDON
Hudson Institute
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR:

As someone who has argued for the past decade that American political institutions are importantly shaped by Reformed Protestantism, I enthusiastically welcome David Gelernter's thoughtful essay. He gets much right: for nearly four centuries Americans have indeed understood themselves as morally superior; their sense of being chosen is biblical in nature; American biblicism was initially Hebraic; and European anti-Americanism does rest heavily on a hostility to American Christianity. Still, there are features of Mr. Gelernter's argument that he might have addressed with greater care.

Most critically, he fails to see that there have been at least two biblically-derived variants of what he describes as Americanism: one most prevalent in the 17th and 18th centuries, and another more often advanced from the end of the 18th century. The older version, as he delightfully highlights, is centered in the Hebrew Scriptures and is more Hebraic than New Testament. Like Judaism, this tradition is particularistic, describing a uniquely chosen people's relationship to God and a covenantal relationship that is not transferable. The second biblical understanding also views Americans as a chosen people, but it understands America as a model for all mankind. In its overwhelming universalism, this millennial vision is New Testament and evangelical.

Mr. Gelernter is also mistaken, I believe, in arguing that these religious visions stand alone without accompanying secular equivalents. Americans' Old Testament-style understanding of themselves as a chosen people resonated, sometimes awkwardly, with the recognition that their political and cultural institutions were essentially English, and derived from historical and common-law traditions. As for the universalism inspired by the New Testament, its secular equivalent was a humanistic Deism that argued for the universal applicability of Americanism to all people. This more cosmopolitan line of Americanism shares a good deal with the utopian aspirations of the French Revolution. To ignore the tensions between these different traditions is to misread American history and to encourage their amalgamation, as American Presidents have often done, in the service of contemporary policy goals.

Mr. Gelernter similarly might have attended more carefully to the changing understandings of the key concepts in his characterization of the American creed: freedom, equality, and democracy. None of them, in any form comparable to contemporary understandings, was embraced by American authors and spokesmen before 1760. Also problematic is his lack of attention to changing corporate and individualistic uses of them. The key concept of equality was used in the 18th century primarily to refer to peoples, while in the 19th century it came to have a more individualistic connotation.

With regard to European anti-Americanism, a recognition of two contrasting American biblical self-understandings highlights the fact that Europeans are not so much anti-American as anti- "red-state" America. As Mr. Gelernter rightly notes, Reformed and Pietistic Protestantism has produced in America a dominant culture that is populist, localist, nationalist, aesthetically lowbrow, particularistic, and Hebraic. But this is not the entirety of America. Many of our elites hold to a mutated version of a universalist Americanism; they aspire to emulate Europe's post-Roman-Catholic culture, which is elitist, centralizing, cosmopolitan, aesthetically highbrow, universalist, and rooted in the New Testament. What alienates many Europeans is not that Americans are Christians but rather the kind of Christians they are.

David Gelernter deserves our thanks for emphasizing the biblical foundations of Americanism, although he might have provided a more nuanced portrait of its tension-ridden features.

BARRY ALAN SHAIN
Colgate University
Hamilton, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter mentions the Declaration of Independence often in "Americanism—and Its Enemies," but he does not seem to recognize its unique importance in defining the United States as a regime, both in its founding and in its enduring existence. To be as concise as possible, he does not recognize the Declaration of Independence rec-

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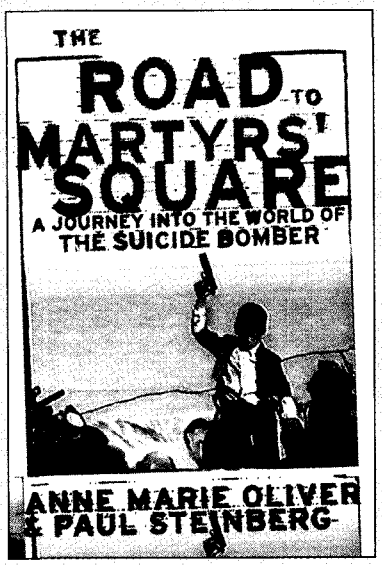

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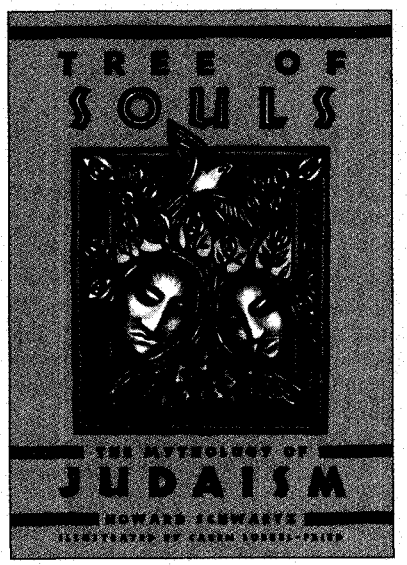

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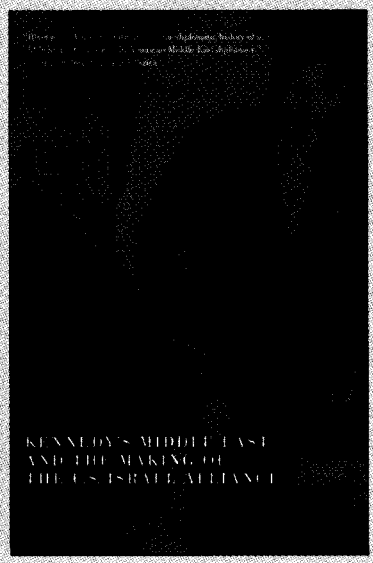

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ognized by Lincoln in the Gettysburg Address.

Mr. Gelernter writes: "Freedom, equality, democracy: the Declaration held these truths to be self evident, but 'self-evident' they were certainly *not*. . . . [T]heologians of Americanism understood these doctrines not as philosophical ideas but as the word of God" (emphasis in the original). Here he is mistaken on at least two counts. Whether he agrees with them or not, the men who signed the Declaration believed that the truths they called self-evident *were* self-evident. The aforesaid self-evident truths constitute the indispensable logical foundation upon which the entire Declaration subsists.

Second, the theologians of the founding did not see any such contradiction as Mr. Gelernter sees between philosophical ideas and the word of God. God speaks to us, they believed, by right reason no less than by revelation. Consider the following excerpt from a sermon by the Reverend Doctor Samuel Chase preached before Governor John Hancock and the legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on October 25, 1780, on the occasion of the inauguration of the new state constitution:

> We want not, indeed, a special revelation from heaven to teach us that all men are born free and equal; that no man has a natural claim to dominion over his neighbors, nor one nation any such claim upon another. . . . These are the plain dictates of that reason and common sense with which the common parent of men has informed the human bosom. It is however a satisfaction to observe such everlasting maxims of equity confirmed, and impressed upon the consciences of men, by the instructions, precepts, and examples given us in the sacred oracles.

In saying that it is a self-evident truth that "all men are created equal," the Declaration asserts, as Locke did in the *Second Treatise*, that there is no difference between any two human beings such as to make one by nature the ruler of the other. Locke says that we are all God's property, from which it follows that no man can usurp God's title in us by claiming a right of property in another human being. A human being claiming an intrinsic right to own—and rule—another human being is claiming a right that can only belong to God.

For one human being to rule legitimately, and the other to be so ruled, there must be a prior agreement, a social compact or contract. Any attempt by anyone to claim greater safety, or lesser obligation, would exclude him (or her) from the community being formed by the compact. This is the essential meaning of the equality under the law which is the rule of law, and which constitutional government is meant to embody. Its foundation is that equality of rights alone which each one of us has from God and nature.

HARRY V. JAFFA
Claremont Institute
Claremont, California

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter's balanced and cogent presentation wins nothing but praise from me, apart from a quibble or two and some additions. The heart of his argument connects Americanism with the biblical faith of the American community as the chief source of its strength and identity—exactly right, in my view.

Mr. Gelernter refers to Lincoln's description of Americans in his Second Inaugural as an "almost chosen people." This has more often than not been taken to imply humility rather than hubris, as it has played out in American public policy. Jingoism and imperialism are perversities—even tinging current policy debates—of this "chosenness," rather than authentic expressions of it. Lincoln's phrase points to the American community's constant supplication for divine favor, akin to that symbolized in the parable of the Prodigal Son who rejects, strays, and returns seeking mercy.

I agree with Mr. Gelernter that the Declaration of Independence is a primary text for any understanding of Americanism. It powerfully evokes the relationship between creature and Creator and the sense of providential governance of human affairs. It also hints at man as *imago Dei* and thereby indelibly stamped with liberty in the mode of inalienable rights, thus reflecting his Creator's salient attributes. The liberal political theory that Locke based on this anthropology demands consent for the legitimacy of laws and government itself, whose powers are thereby inherently limited and whose cardinal purpose is to serve its citizenry and not they it. As Thomas Jefferson later said, the Declaration expressed the Whig consensus of all Americans at the time.

When Jefferson and John Adams coined the term Americanism as early as 1797, they meant all of this. But they also meant the republicanism nurtured in Western political philosophy by the most famous writings of our civilization, from the Israelite republic of 70 elders to Aristotle's "mixed" regime, to Aquinas, whom Lord Acton thought the "first Whig," to the Commonwealthmen of the English 17th century, such as John Milton and Algernon Sidney, whose language is soaked in biblical and classical understanding. From Richard Hooker by way of Locke their Americanism embraced the principle that "Laws they are not which public approbation hath not made so."

Still another great strand of Americanism is common-law constitutionalism, from Magna Carta to Sir Edward Coke's *Institutes*. With it came a sturdy historical jurisprudence to augment the jurisprudence of divine and Stoic natural law that played such a key role in cogently justifying departure from the realm of England.

Such Americanism—a highly differentiated complex of vital beliefs—has sustained the nation into the present. Perhaps it remains alive and well in the heartland despite all of our social amnesia and recent educational depredations. It has certainly structured over time the resolve to fight for what the United States took to be right and in the national interest—our just wars against the great tyrannies of the 20th century, the

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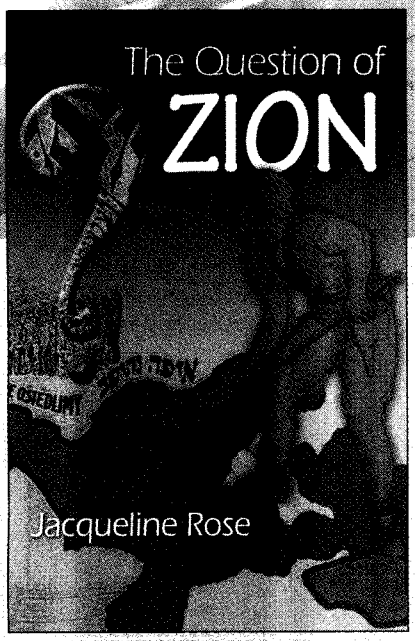

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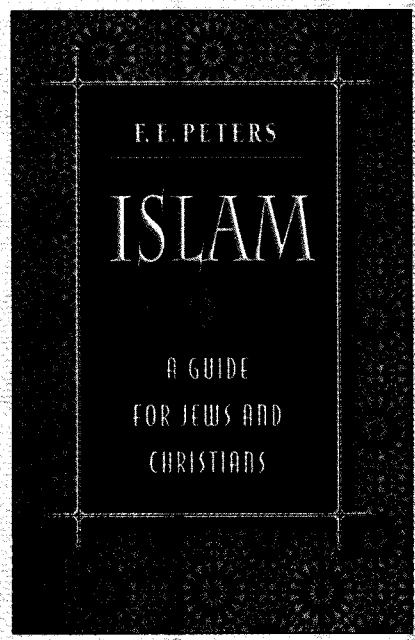

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present war against terrorism—and it inspired by its universalism our own civil-rights revolution.

Of course, by its insistent affirmation of man's tension with the divine ground of all reality, Americanism has enraged and alienated some enlightened "elites" who prefer trendy reductionist ideologies. Such superior persons derisively sneer at those unable to understand that all things are permitted, that might is right, and that the highest being for man is man himself. But that is a subject for another occasion.

ELLIS SANDOZ
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter chronicles four moments in American history when the nation's religious character inspired its leaders and its people to overcome great challenges. I believe that he overlooks one other such moment: the period of 1880-1914, when waves of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe understood their journey to America in biblical terms. A classic expression of this is found in a memoir by Mary Antin (1881-1949), *The Promised Land*, in which she recounts her childhood in a Russian shtetl, her journey to America as a young girl, and her education in Boston. The following passage, describing her last Passover meal in Russia, could not be clearer:

> But what said some of us at the end of the long service? Not "May we be next year in Jerusalem," but "Next year—in America!" So there was our promised land, and many faces were turned toward the West. And if the waters of the Atlantic did not part for them, the wanderers rode its bitter flood by a miracle as great as any the rod of Moses ever wrought.

LEO H. MADDEN
Ohio Dominican University
Columbus, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter's argument that the Hebrew Bible played an essential role in shaping American politics is further supported by an episode he does not mention. In his book, *Counsel to the President*, Clark Clifford described one of the factors that motivated President Harry Truman to recognize the state of Israel in 1948, against the wishes of his own State Department and its popular Secretary, General George C. Marshall:

> [H]e was a student and believer in the Bible since his youth. From his reading of the Old Testament he felt the Jews derived a legitimate right to Palestine, and he sometimes cited such biblical lines as Deuteronomy 1:8: "Behold, I have given up the land before you; go in and take possession of the land which the Lord hath sworn unto your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob."

TED GUTOWSKI
Highland Park, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter's fine article omits one important 20th-century book on his subject: *The Faith of America: Prayers, Readings, and Songs for the Celebration of American Holidays*, compiled by Mordecai M. Kaplan, J. Paul Williams, and Eugene Kohn. The book contains readings from the founding fathers and many distinguished statesmen and authors. Rabbi Kaplan, the noted founder of the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism, contributed several excellent essays demonstrating his love for American (as well as Jewish) civilization. Also included is a Thanksgiving Haggadah, which Mr. Gelernter might consult before proceeding with the writing of his own.

RONALD W. SATZ
Trevose, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

In "Americanism—and Its Enemies," David Gelernter rightly dismisses the many fatuous commentators who compare Christian revivalists with Islamists. While both groups might view the same types of behavior as sinful, there is a vast difference between the likes of Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, who believe we must pray for sinners, and Islamists, who believe sinners must be killed. Those who fail to distinguish between the two are either ignorant or seek to promote some wider anti-Christian agenda.

JOHN C. ZIMMERMAN
University of Nevada
Las Vegas, Nevada

DAVID GELERNTER writes:

I disagree with my critics mainly insofar as their claims strike me as historically shallow. But several of these letters have a more disturbing undertone, which is likely to grow steadily more familiar: an anti-religious bigotry that takes in not only Judaism (the usual target) but also Christianity.

To Max Davies: that some religious people are sincere and some are not was obvious to Isaiah, indeed to the biblical patriarchs; it cannot be classified as breaking news. The same holds for all human pronouncements: some are sincere and some are not. American settlers of the 17th and 18th centuries have often been accused of excessive sincerity or seriousness or inflexibility. There is some truth to the accusation. To accuse them of the opposite is merely silly.

Further, the idea that belief in God correlates with "a string of uninterrupted successes" is wrong. On the one hand, many hugely powerful nations (from Rome at the time of Augustus to Stalinist Russia in 1945) have experienced "a string of uninterrupted successes" but no surge of religious belief. On the other hand, ancient Israel, to take only the most obvious example, saw its "God-given destiny crumble into ruin" when the Romans beat back Jewish rebellions in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries C.E.—but Jewish belief in God did *not* crumble. If anything, it grew stronger.

Mr. Davies's idea that America merely traces out Europe's experience a couple of centuries later is nonsense. He might like to recall that a liberal republic built on freedom and religious tolerance was an American invention that spread to Europe, not vice versa. In any case, America and Europe differ in too many deep (and obvious) ways for the theory that America tags after Europe to be plausible. No European nation ever experienced the sort of peaceful, basically unchallenged Puritan domination that the

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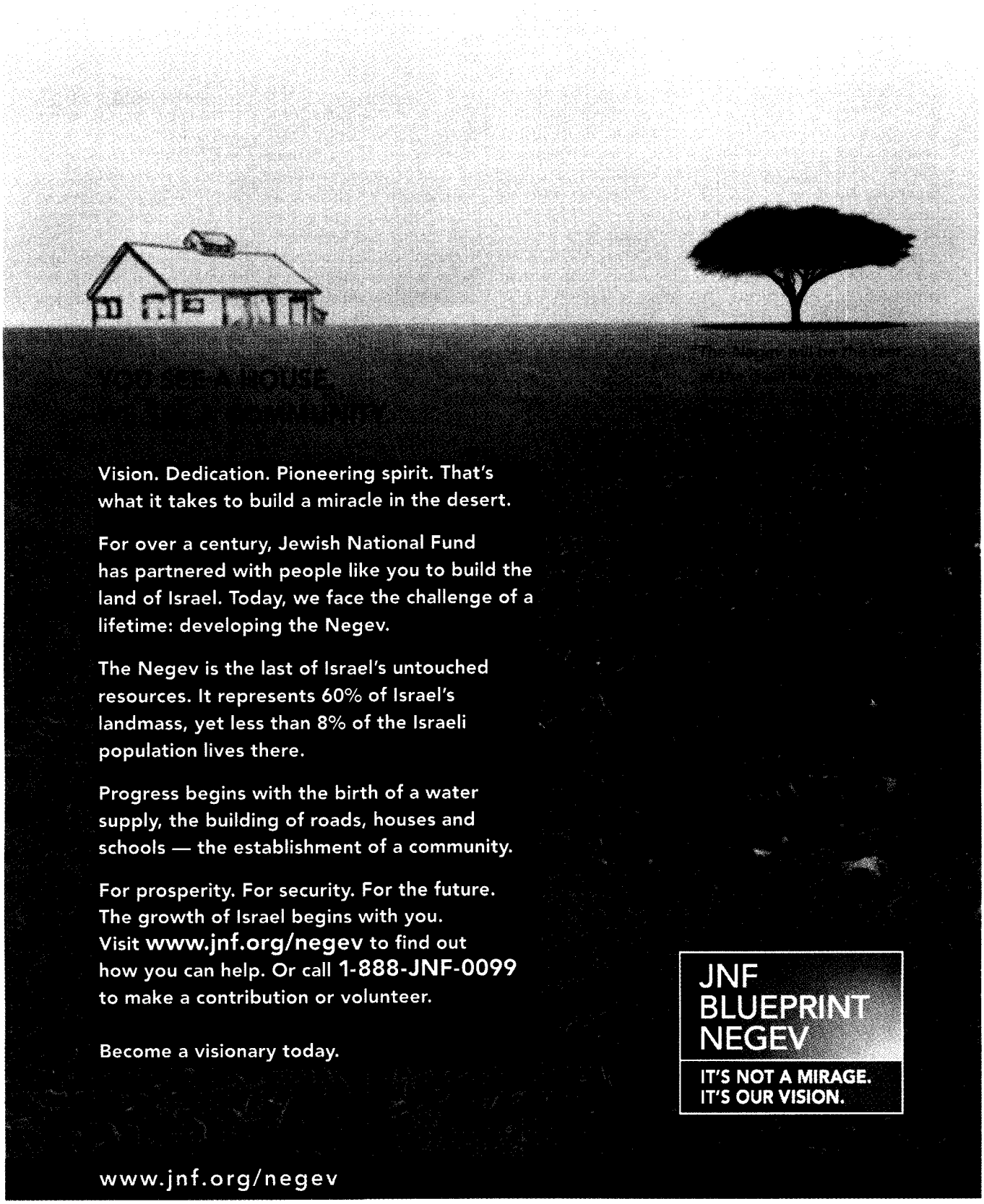
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American colonies did in the 17th and 18th centuries. No European nation ever developed a new culture without medieval roots, or had an entire thinly populated continent as its stage, or oceans on each side to protect it, or a frontier to draw off the most venturesome (or malcontent) part of the population, or a citizenry pieced together out of all the world's odds and ends, or a political tradition of democracy and religious freedom since independence.

It is true that America's commercial success was crucial to our cold-war victory. But to write that "the might of our economy makes the world our stage" strikes me as implying that American ideas dominate the world because our economy is so powerful. Wrong. We dominate the world economically today, but the U.S. economy dominated the world even more absolutely during the second half of the 1940's and the early 50's—years of steady Communist advance. This proves that economic domination is neither necessary nor sufficient for ideological domination: our having it didn't make us ideologically dominant; their lacking it didn't keep them from being ideologically dominant.

Todd Wiggins writes that there are "valid reasons why a genuine advocate of democracy and equality might be suspicious of America's newfound missionary zeal in the Middle East." Not if this "genuine advocate" knows any history, or has reflected on the difference between peace and war. In the cold war we made alliances with bad characters when those alliances served our wartime strategy; that is how nations act in wartime—and it is hard to credit Mr. Wiggins's sincerity when he mentions Iran, Southeast Asia, and Latin America without mentioning our foulest alliance by far, with Stalin's Russia during World War II. Should we have refused to make common cause with Stalin against the Nazis? I suppose it is a fair question, and reasonable men will differ, but I am not convinced that Mr. Wiggins is reasonable.

After all, he revives the tired anti-Semitic slur according to which "chosenness" (as in "the chosen people") is a criminal idea that leads to genocide. Any idea is dangerous in the wrong hands—turn the other cheek, don't hurt a fly, love (or appease) thine enemy is certainly a *dangerous* idea (has been shown to be near-fatal to civilization) when the wrong people get hold of it and use it in the wrong way. Granted, some ideas are better than others; the "chosen people" is one of the best there is, because it has forced Jews throughout history to hold themselves to a higher standard than mankind generally.

The prophet Amos defined the Jewish idea of "chosenness"—"You alone have I known among all the families of earth," God says; "therefore will I visit upon you *all* your sins." This compulsion to meet a higher standard is expressed in the Israeli army's idea of *tohar ha-neshek*, the purity of arms, in that army's generally exemplary behavior, and in its self-accusatory despair when it fails to live up to its own stringent standards. America took over the idea of a "chosen people" and has understood it the same way. Thus Abu Ghraib, a sad and sordid story—but not a story that you would think would amount to much in a nation where tens of thousands were buried in mass graves and torture had been institutionalized. Yet America's political life virtually ground to a halt as Americans from one end of the political spectrum to the other denounced and deplored (as they should have) this breach of our own high standards.

At some point the shallow atheism that evidently inspires views like Mr. Wiggins's will have to face the big question it has avoided for a half-century. During World War II, mankind's greatest crisis, people would have given nearly anything to be occupied by the forces of a Christian nation rather than a nation where state paganism ruled. Why? Why is the pattern so consistent? Why does it cut across lines of alliance and common cause? To be occupied by America was better (to say the least) than to be occupied by Nazi Germany; British occupation was better than Russian; occupation by fascist yet still-Christian Italy was preferable to occupation by Germany *or* by (America's ally) Russia; in Asia, occupation by Britain or America (two colonial powers) was preferable to occupation by the brutal, pagan Japanese.

An associated phenomenon to ponder: the devoutly Christian views of de Gaulle, Adenauer, and de Gasperi, three men who did so much to rebuild Europe after World War II. Obviously Christianity is not the whole story of the defeat of the blood-drenched state paganisms of those years. Obviously, too, Christianity has many sins and crimes to answer for; we have heard about those at length, which is right and proper. But honesty demands that we understand its achievements, too.

As for Mr. Wiggins's idea that Western Europeans have a "more evolved view of democracy than Americans," does that explain European contempt for democracy in Iraq? Europe's anti-Israel bigotry? Europe's admirable all-around moral suppleness? No doubt.

Christopher Blackwell is wrong: that the American constitution reflects the Christian ideas of a Puritan nation is plain historical fact. What Puritanism contributed to America first and foremost was not a tendency to beat and exile dissenters or to wreck religious art or burn witches; America has shown none of those tendencies. Puritanism contributed first and foremost the profound humaneness—the passion for justice and rightness—that is the main theme of the Hebrew Bible. Thus Michael Novak in his masterpiece about the American founding, *On Two Wings*:

> Practically all American Christians erected their main arguments about political life from materials in the Jewish Testament. . . . The language of Judaism came to be the central language of the American metaphysic—the unspoken background to a special American vision of nature, history, and the destiny of the human race.

As for the Puritans themselves, Mr. Blackwell does not have to convince me that they were sinners who

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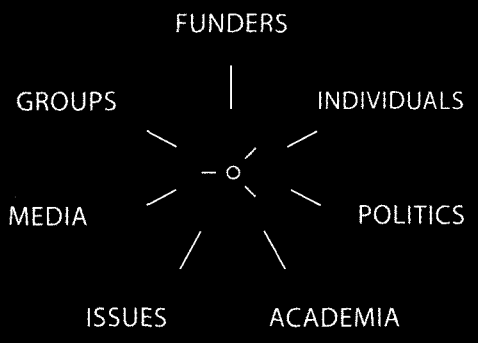

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were capable of evil; they were well aware of it. Anyone who is part of the Judeo-Christian tradition understands that the same holds for all human beings. I argued that Puritanism had contributed many good things to Americanism, not that Puritans were less capable of sin than their fellow human beings.

Eric Laureys's idea that religion imposes the "rule of the unquestionable" is simple-minded. The history of Christianity is one long debate about the meaning of Scripture, Jesus, the Trinity, and so forth. Of course tyrants have used religion as a weapon with which to beat people down; tyrants use anything they can get their hands on. Virtually all human doctrines and intellectual systems have been abused at one time or other. Democracy in classical Athens or 18th-century America seemed consistent with slave-holding. Patriotism drove Britain's resistance to Hitlerite Germany but also (in perverted form) drove Nazi Germany. Science has vastly expanded human knowledge and well-being, and has also been used to shore up tyrants, and now threatens (by setting human cloning in motion) to mount a direct attack on the human soul. None of which means that we should abolish religion, democracy, patriotism, or science. If you want to locate the bona-fide "rule of the unquestionable" nowadays, go to Harvard and give a common-sense explanation for the scarcity of women in science.

Democracy in America did not result from "the decline of the clergy"; American clergymen stood in the forefront of democratic forces. Mr. Laureys should try reading some American sermons of that era instead of guessing what they say; he is not a good guesser.

To Elliot S. Isaac: I am happy to admit that "the secular thought of America's founding fathers" is a platitude that thousands (or millions) of Americans believe in; that doesn't make it true. But let me focus on Mr. Isaac's question: "Where in traditional, organized religion is there any suggestion that democracy is necessary for human existence?"

Here is one example. In a famous dispute in the Talmud, one rabbi's opinion is endorsed by a voice from heaven—in other words, by the Lord Himself. Yet the other rabbis refuse to concede. They say "We do not listen to voices from Heaven, because You [God] have already written in the Torah at the mountain [i.e. at Sinai]: 'Decide according to the majority!'" The rabbis of the Talmud, in other words, believe that a democratic majority of their group *can overrule God Himself*. If that is not a suggestion that "democracy is necessary for human existence," I do not know what is. Of course there are many other such "suggestions"; I remind Mr. Isaac of the difference between not knowing any examples and there not *being* any examples.

I don't know what planet Chris Seymour lives on, but I regretfully conclude that it is probably the same one I do. Why doesn't he tell us how many lives the Allies paid to defeat Hitler and the Japanese, or what Lincoln's troops paid to defend the Union and eradicate slavery, or what Washington's paid to win independence in the first place?

The point is almost too obvious to repeat, but here goes: sometimes we must hurt in order to help. Small children often find it impossible to accept that any good can come from a needle stuck in your arm. Surgery is often dangerous and always damaging, yet we do not ban surgery. The longer the world waits to overthrow an entrenched tyrant, the higher the grand total when the bill comes due for all those years of murder and torture the world permitted (and in some cases bankrolled). All this is obvious.

As for the idea that America's war in Iraq had to do with securing oil reserves, it is a tired lie that has done the Left much service; but enough is enough. We had Iraq's oil fields in our grasp after the first Gulf war and handed them back to Saddam Hussein. Because we trusted him to keep America's best interests at heart? Not likely. We handed them back for the same reason Israel returned the Sinai oilfields to Egypt: because they did not belong to us.

Regarding Tim Buck's letter, it is absolutely true that Puritanism encouraged capitalism—which has led on the whole to prosperity and well-being all over the world.

Mr. Buck writes that "humanitarian decency is expressed only in the radical and unconditional liberalism of someone like Jesus." I could discuss "humanitarian decency" in the lives of such non-radicals as Lincoln or Churchill or Teddy Roosevelt or FDR or Truman or Reagan, but I'll stick to a case I know better: me. I am no radical liberal or leftist. What gives Mr. Buck the right to conclude that I am incapable of (or incapable of expressing) "humanitarian decency"? If that *is* what he thinks of me, I say he lies—or (more likely) talks nonsense on a topic he knows nothing about.

Matthew Rose puts his finger on a fascinating aspect of the American religion, discussed by Samuel Huntington in his recent book *Who Are We?* Huntington notes that "two words . . . do not appear in civil-religion statements and ceremonies. They are 'Jesus Christ.' . . . The American civil religion is Christianity without Christ." I do not always agree with Huntington, but he has certainly got this point right: American statesmen have tended from the first to be deeply religious *and* to avoid mentioning the Christian messiah. Why? Robert Frost gave us a hint when he described himself as an "Old Testament Christian."

I am a great admirer of Herb London, but his idea that freedom and democracy must be earned seems to imply that if you are not strong enough to win them, you do not deserve them. Yet small nations have never been powerful enough to "earn" freedom; traditionally they have existed as vassal or client states of some great power. Was it right that Judea was a Roman vassal? Or the Netherlands a Spanish vassal, or Finland hostage to Russia, or the Congo a Belgian property, and so forth?

In the Bible God demands repeatedly that the weak be defended. "All my bones shall say, Lord, 'who is like unto Thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him,

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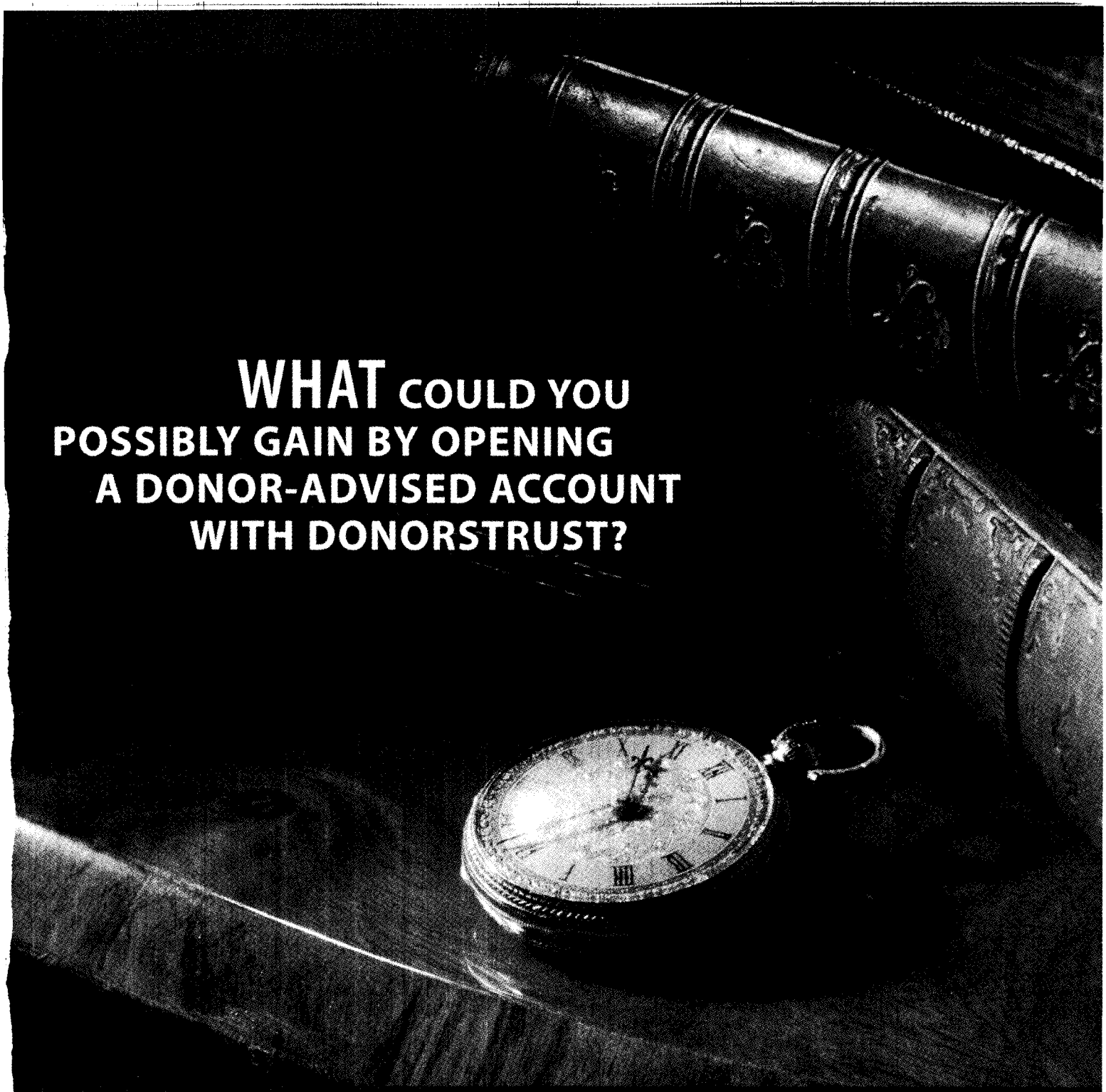

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yea, the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him?'" (Psalms 35:10). This Psalm was once thought to apply to America itself, even though we "earned" our freedom; Michael Novak notes that it was read in September 1774 as part of the first prayer before the Continental Congress. John Adams described the scene in a letter to his wife: "I never saw a greater effect upon an audience. It seemed as if heaven had ordained that Psalm to be read on that morning. . . . I saw tears gush into the eyes of the old, grave pacifist Quakers of Philadelphia. . . . I must beg you to read that Psalm."

I couldn't agree more strongly that the citizens of a free country have a duty, as Mr. London suggests, to defend their freedom to the death. But even at that, they might be too weak to succeed; in which case it is our duty as free men and God-fearing Americans to help them.

Barry Alan Shain is wrong to believe that the transition from "particularistic" to "universal" is a New Testament transition. It is a Hebrew Bible transition. Here is a quick summary (in the form of extracts) of the Book of Jonah.

"The word of the Lord to Jonah ben Amittai was as follows: Arise and go to Nineveh that great city, and proclaim against it; because its wickedness has come up before Me." (Nineveh was a foreign city, not a Jewish one.) "And the people of Nineveh believed in God"; "and word reached the king of Nineveh, who arose from his chair and laid off his robe." The king said: "Let every man repent of his evil ways, of the violence they have in hand." "And God saw their works, that they had repented of their evil ways." God forgives Nineveh, and explains to Jonah that He cares for all mankind. That's the gist; the rest is commentary.

Mr. Shain is absolutely right that freedom, equality, and democracy are ideas that evolved and changed; but the same holds for virtually all ideas and (for that matter) nearly all religious doctrines. He is also right that American and European thinking is a contrast not so much between Christianity and atheism as between two different kinds of Christianity. This is a deep observation that would have required another piece to explore. Let me just briefly assert that the pacifist appeasement in which Europe religiously believes is the antithesis of the "Old Testament" Christianity characteristic of Puritanism and Americanism; but it is a valid kind of Christianity in its own right, deeply rooted in the New Testament.

Both Harry V. Jaffa and Ellis Sandoz make valuable and interesting points, but on balance I cannot agree with either of them. (I do not mean that their letters or arguments are identical.) They paint a fascinating picture of multiple strands coming together in the Declaration; in particular, along with many other scholars, they hold that Locke and philosophical currents associated with Locke were major influences on the founding fathers. I agree they were influences, but not major ones. The Bible strikes me as having been far more important. It also seems to me that intellectuals tend to overrate the effect that other intellectuals have had on the course of history.

Religion is nearly always a more important influence than philosophy, for a simple reason: the Bible is a lot easier to read and understand than most philosophers are. This held true even in the 18th century. Look at the famous and voluminous correspondence between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson (in Lester Cappon's edition): in a series of letters covering 49 years (with large gaps) and filling more than 600 pages, Locke comes up in exactly *one* letter. This is a letter by Jefferson late in the series (1820), referring to Locke's opinion on the relationship between an infinite God and finite created beings; Jefferson writes that "these however are speculations and subtleties in which, for my own part, I have little indulged myself."

Jefferson was a brilliant man, but this might well have been his verdict on philosophy in general. Even brilliant men rarely bother with it. Elsewhere, Jefferson wrote that "the God who gave us life gave us liberty at the same time"; such doctrines were far more influential (one suspects) than anything any philosopher ever said. Recall Conrad Cherry's common-sense observation that "more colonists were prepared for armed resistance by the clergy's Sunday and election sermons than by the books and pamphlets of a Locke or a Paine."

Thus prepared, one encounters Michael Novak's fascinating report of a survey conducted by Donald Lutz, who "counted 3,154 citations in the writings of the founders; of these, nearly 1,100 (34 percent) are to the Bible, and about 300 each to Montesquieu and Blackstone, followed at a considerable distance by Locke and Hume and Plutarch." Which does not mean that philosophical arguments were unimportant, merely that they were *less* important than biblical ones.

In sum: I agree with Messrs. Jaffa and Sandoz that religion and philosophy both played a role in the thinking that underlies the Declaration. I confess that I left philosophy out of my essay because it seemed to me that no one was in danger of missing *its* role, whereas many people had missed religion's role completely. As Carl Bridenbaugh wrote in 1962 (when the problem was far less acute), "No understanding of the 18th century is possible if we unconsciously omit, or consciously jam out, the religious theme just because our own milieu is secular. The era of the Enlightenment was far more an Age of Faith (and Emotion) than an Age of Reason." But the professors are right: I ought to have mentioned the (subsidiary) role of philosophy in shaping the ideas of the founding fathers, and I thank them for pointing this out.

Leo H. Madden's comment is profoundly germane, as is Ted Gutowski's. Ronald W. Satz is right, but it is worth pointing out that there are a fair number of Thanksgiving Haggadot in circulation; I did not mean to suggest that no such creature had ever been thought of. I did mean to suggest that none has ever achieved currency. I agree with John C. Zimmerman and thank him for his letter.

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U.N. Corruption Includes Bias Against Israel

It's Time the Media Set the Record Straight

Branches of the United Nations have endorsed Palestinian terrorist attacks against Israel (or in U.N. terminology – use of "all available means including armed struggle" against "foreign occupation"*). They have taught Palestinian children anti-Jewish hatred and encouraged them to pursue Israel's destruction and have subjected the Jewish state to a unique campaign of vilification. Yet news reports of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish actions by the U.N. routinely ignore the organization's bias and portray the U.N. as an objective moral arbiter.

The U.N. Conference Against Racism in Durban promoted racism – against Israel and the Jews.

The Facts:

Saddam Hussein was not alone in buying influence at the U.N. where corruption goes far beyond the Iraq oil-for-food scam. For more than 30 years, Arab states have used their oil wealth, and the threat of withholding oil, to guarantee an automatic anti-Israel majority.

The U.N. General Assembly, dominated by Arab and Muslim states most of whose schools, media and mosques promote Jew-hatred, repeatedly passes one-sided, anti-Israel (and anti-American) resolutions, and blocks criticism of Palestinian and broader Arab actions, including genocide.

The General Assembly has repeatedly convened emergency sessions dedicated to condemning the Jewish State but has held no such sessions on the Rwandan massacres, Indonesian crimes in East Timor, ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, Iraqi slaughter of Kurds, Vietnamese mass murder of ethnic Chinese or genocide in the Sudan. (Sudan, a member of the Arab League, has been protected at the U.N. by Arab states, despite the Sudanese government's genocide against Christians and non-Arab Muslims.)

Israel is the only country subject to hostile scrutiny by a standing committee — the "Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories."

The Arab-Israeli conflict is the only global dispute in which one side's position — the Arab side — is advanced through direct U.N. funding and support. U.N. Secretariat and General Assembly branches spend millions of dollars a year to advocate a pro-Palestinian agenda through conferences, publications and films that delegitimize the State of Israel.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is the only U.N. agency dedicated to assisting a specific group of refugees, the Palestinian Arabs, who comprise just 13.5% of all refugees globally. UNRWA schools use anti-Semitic textbooks which seek to delegitimize Israel and promote its destruction.

For more than half a century, UNRWA has opposed permanent settlement of Palestinians in their present areas of residence, instead supporting Arab demands that their refugee status continue until Israel allows them residence within its borders.

UNRWA chief Peter Hansen openly states that Hamas members are on UNRWA's payroll. (The EU and United States designate Hamas a terrorist organization.) UNRWA employees have used official U.N. vehicles, ambulances and travel documents to transport terrorists and weapons. UNRWA camps harbor terrorists who produce bombs, store weapons and recruit and train suicide bombers.

The U.N.'s Commission on Human Rights has repeatedly supported the right of Palestinians to pursue their terror campaign against Israel while ignoring massive human rights violations by its members — including some of the worst human rights violators and sponsors of terrorism.

The U.N. World Conference Against Racism (Durban, 2001) promoted racism — against Israel and the Jews. References to "holocaust" and "anti-Semitism" were applied to the Palestinians as victims of alleged Israeli racism.

The U.N.'s dangerous bias and scapegoating of Israel deserve full and accurate exposure in the media.

*United Nations General Assembly A/RES/37/43 (Dec. 3, 1982)
United Nations General Assembly A/RES/41/101 (Dec 4, 1986)
United Nations commission on Human Rights E/CN/RES/2002/8 (April 15, 2002)
United Nations commission on Human Rights E/CN/RES/2003/6 (April 15, 2003)
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The Democrats

TO THE EDITOR:

Joshua Muravchik's analysis of the 2004 election makes a good deal of sense, but I disagree with his suggestion that the endorsement of "liberalism" has spelled defeat for Democratic presidential candidates going back to 1980 ["Why the Democrats Keep Losing," January]. Matters are more complicated than that.

For example, what undid Jimmy Carter in 1980 was less his liberal "true colors" than his ineffectiveness in dealing with problems like the Iran hostage crisis and rampant inflation. Ronald Reagan projected a forceful image, portraying himself as someone who could get things done. He was elected despite his perceived anti-liberal views on domestic matters, not because of them.

The 1988 election, in which the first George Bush beat Michael Dukakis, also did not reflect a rejection of liberalism. Had Mario Cuomo run, as many expected him to do, he almost certainly would have beaten Bush.

In 2000, George W. Bush's victory over Al Gore hardly signaled the public's rejection of "liberalism." Despite running a weak campaign and being burdened with the legacy of Bill Clinton's misconduct, Gore was still able to win a clear popular majority, and only the votes siphoned off by the more liberal Ralph Nader denied him the electoral victory.

In the 2004 election, as Mr. Muravchik notes, national security made the difference; Bush's unwavering response to terrorism is what earned him a national majority. The swing in popular votes to the Republicans should not be interpreted as a rejection of liberalism or any kind of harbinger for the future.

ERNEST B. HOOK
University of California
Berkeley, California

TO THE EDITOR:

I cannot argue with most of Joshua Muravchik's analysis, but he does not stress the one element that has been common to all Democratic losses in postwar presidential elections: from Adlai Stevenson in 1952 to John Kerry in 2004, all of the unsuccessful nominees were perceived as weak on national defense.

If the Democrats wish to regain the White House, they must decide to be the pro-defense party of Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Henry "Scoop" Jackson instead of the party of Jimmy Carter and Michael Moore. Since the Afghanistan campaign, the Democratic base and its elected officials have shifted strongly to the Left. The selection of Howard Dean as chairman of the Democratic National Committee only furthers this trend.

GIL BORMAN
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR:

Despite his obvious partisanship, Joshua Muravchik has written a probing analysis of the Democrats' defeat in the November election. Indeed, many of his observations echo those of Democrats who are reexamining their party's ideas, policies, and electoral strategies.

At least twice in his article, however, Mr. Muravchik embraces the lowest of the Republican attacks on John Kerry. The campaign by the Swift Boat Veterans group was an indefensible assault on Kerry's undeniably courageous war record. Even if one accepts that Kerry had engaged in some slight exaggerations of his service, the contrast with the military record of George W. Bush is so striking that one might have thought the Republicans would want to avoid the subject altogether. I agree that the antiwar activities of Kerry were legitimate subjects of debate and discussion. Mr. Muravchik characterizes these activities as the "more important part" of the Swift Boat Veterans' case, but their television commercials and the publicity given to them by the press largely focused on John Kerry's service in Vietnam rather than on his later opposition to the war.

Mr. Muravchik's article is also marred by his embrace of the obscene claim of many Republicans that John Kerry was in some sense Osama bin Laden's "candidate." To establish this charge, Mr. Muravchik cites remarks by bin Laden before the election as published by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI).

But the accuracy of MEMRI's translation may be questioned. Bin Laden's promise that "any state that does not toy with our security guarantees its own" makes sense if, as the media initially construed it, the word "state" is understood as "nation." Bin Laden was offering peace to countries that abstained from the fight against al Qaeda. MEMRI's claim that "state" referred to one of the 50 states of the Union—which were thus being offered an incentive to vote for Kerry—is hard to accept. Does Mr. Muravchik really believe that, the 9/11 attacks notwithstanding, bin Laden was granting immunity to a "blue" state like New York that was sure to vote for John Kerry, and that any future acts of terrorism will be directed against, say, Montana and other states that voted for Bush?

HOWARD E. NEGRIN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

In his election postmortem, Joshua Muravchik accuses Mark Halperin, the political director of ABC News, of displaying a pro-Kerry bias. The basis of the charge is a memo from October 2004 in which Halperin urged his staff to inform the public of the Bush campaign's use of outright lies to attack Senator Kerry.

What exactly is objectionable about that? The Bush campaign falsely claimed that Kerry advocated a government takeover of the health-care system, and ABC's coverage offered corrective insight and context.

Similarly, when the Kerry campaign warned duplicitously about a possible military draft and a flu-vaccine shortage, ABC called them on it. Where is the bias?

It seems that many right-wing partisans complain about media bias as a strategy to advance their cause. They hope to pressure news organizations into giving their candidates more favorable coverage, while at the same time stirring up their base by promoting the idea that liberal media elites are trying to foist their views on America.

SETH SEIFMAN
Washington, D.C.

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The Holocaust: Sixty Years Later

Has the spirit of Auschwitz been revived?

Sixty years ago, the death camp of Auschwitz was liberated. That cursed place has come to symbolize the horror of the Holocaust. Best estimates are that in Auschwitz-Birkenau alone, over 1.5 million people, most of them Jews from many countries of Europe, were killed and burned. The resolve was "Never Again." But has the spirit of Auschwitz really died?

What are the facts?

Blood libel revisited: In medicine, certain diseases are believed to have been eradicated, but occasionally – decades later – some of them return, often with renewed savagery. The world thought that anti-Semitism, the horrible disease that had unleashed the Holocaust and its six million Jewish victims, had been overcome once and for all. But the virus of hatred that demonized Jews and that herded them to their deaths has revived and is again in full flourish.

Since the Holocaust and since the defeat of the Nazis, it is no longer acceptable openly to proclaim Jew-hatred – except in the Moslem countries. Print and broadcast media in virtually all Moslem countries convey the meanest anti-Semitic propaganda, in the same vein as that of the Nazis. Blood libel, the scandalous slander that Jews use the blood of Christians or Moslems for ritual purposes, mostly to bake their matzot, is circulating freely and widely believed. The Czarist forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is now a best seller in virtually all Moslem countries. And so is Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

> "Those who peddle anti-Semitism under the guise of anti-Israelism . . . better think again. There will be no second Holocaust—NEVER AGAIN!"

But in the "civilized" countries of Europe, anti-Semitism is disguised as the socially acceptable enmity toward Israel, the state of the Jews. Over 60 per cent of those polled in Europe assert that Israel is the greatest danger to the peace of the world (barely edging out the United States). The French ambassador to Great Britain referred to Israel as "that sh..ty little country" being the source of all the troubles of the world. Was he disciplined or removed by his government for this obscene outburst? Of course not!

Spirit of genocide: The Auschwitz spirit of 65 years ago that unleashed genocide in Europe did not perish with the Nazis. It is alive and well in many parts of the world, in which Adolf Hitler is still a hero. By now, most European nations – prominently France, Belgium, the Netherlands, but also Britain, Germany and the Scandinavian countries – have substantial Moslem populations. The goal of virtually all of them is the destruction of Israel. In that, they find a receptive audience in much of the European public, a public whose grandfathers were the perpetrator generation that killed six million Jews.

Can the barely disguised enmity toward Israel be explained by anything other than anti-Semitism? There are the crocodile tears over the alleged "occupation of Arab land" by the Israelis, the alleged mistreatment of the Arabs by the "brutal Israeli occupiers," the "cycle of violence," and the building of a fence to defend against marauding suicide bombers. But all that is hypocrisy, of course, a pretext to rationalize anti-Semitism.

The Europeans don't care about the more than a million blacks who were killed and continue to be killed in the Congo, the hundreds of thousands that were killed in Uganda and in Rwanda, the over two million farmers who were driven off their land in Darfur province in Sudan, and the hundred thousand killed by their Arab fellow citizens. No, it's only Israel that captures the attention of the world and of the United Nations, in which the vast majority of its Resolutions deal with the purported misdeeds of Israel.

Most of the world stands by as the Moslems, already armed to the teeth with the most advanced weapons, feverishly pursue the holy grail of nuclear armaments. Those weapons – freely conceded (at least in the case of Iran) have one purpose only, namely the destruction of Israel. The nations of Europe stand by, some of them secretly hoping perhaps that Israel, that sh..ty little country, will indeed be wiped from the face of the earth. Having committed the first Holocaust, or at least having stood by mostly approvingly, they now countenance with equanimity a second Holocaust, just as long as somebody else does the dirty work.

Israel is aware that its days would be numbered if any of its mortal enemies were to acquire nuclear weapons. Two or three such weapons, placed on the narrow coastal corridor of the country, would be the end of the Jewish state. But Israel will not allow that to happen. It is not going to sacrifice itself on the altar of world opinion. If Iran isn't stopped from acquiring nuclear weapons, there can be little question that, with or without the approval of the United States, Israel would have to preempt and, just as it destroyed the Osirak nuclear plant of Iraq in 1981, would destroy the Iranian nuclear installations – by whatever means it might take. This could quickly escalate to engulf and bring destruction to much of the Middle East. Those who peddle anti-Semitism under the guise of anti-Israelism and those who advocate to dismember Israel and fatally weaken it so as to make it defenseless, better think again. There will be no second Holocaust—NEVER AGAIN!

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TO THE EDITOR:

Joshua Muravchik's "Why the Democrats Keep Losing" is one of the most accurate and insightful political commentaries that I have read in a long time. I am a registered independent, one of a bloc of voters increasingly disenchanted by the politics of the major parties. I did not object to the war in Iraq, only to its abysmally poor prosecution. I had concluded that the Democrats would be hard pressed to muck things up as badly as the Republicans had.

I was thus prepared to vote for a Democrat, almost any Democrat, who could convince me that he would commit himself to a responsible prosecution of the war in Iraq. I hoped for someone of the stature and integrity of a Joseph Lieberman. Alas, the Democrats gave us John Kerry, who still had both of his feet firmly planted in the mire of Vietnam. As a Vietnam veteran myself, I tried very hard to ignore my initial revulsion, recognizing that my feelings were tied up with my hostility to the antiwar movement that Kerry once led. I wanted to believe that he had grown wiser with time. But, as Mr. Muravchik so adeptly points out, Kerry consistently reminded us of his true self. The tired old story of his Cambodian sortie on a long lost Christmas Eve, after it had been debunked repeatedly by a reluctant mainstream press, was only one of the many ways in which Kerry showed his almost Clintonesque aversion to the truth.

I voted for Bush because of my deep sense that, were Kerry to win, the Europeans (particularly the French) would wink behind smug Mona Lisa smiles and in supreme condescension declare that they had "told us so." I voted for Bush because a vote for Kerry would have provided aid and comfort to our mortal enemies. I voted for Bush, ultimately, because Kerry could not convince me that he would do a better job with the war on terror than the arrogant knuckleheads with whom Bush has surrounded himself. In short, I voted for Bush because I had to.

RON ADOLPH
Sanger, California

TO THE EDITOR:

Joshua Muravchik errs in stating that no Democratic presidential candidate has won an absolute majority of the popular vote since Lyndon Johnson in 1964. In fact, Jimmy Carter won the 1976 election with 50.1 percent of the total vote.

PATRICK REDDY
Santa Monica, California

JOSHUA MURAVCHIK writes:

Ernest B. Hook seems to hold the view that everything matters in presidential races *except* political substance. This makes no sense to me. Sure, Ronald Reagan's persona was more appealing than Jimmy Carter's. But to believe that voters saw him only as someone who would "get things done" without caring what it was that he would get done is to paint a very odd picture of the electorate. As for Dukakis, 37 percent of the electorate told an NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll that they found Dukakis "too liberal to be a good President" (as against 25 percent who found the elder George Bush too conservative). The Democrats have run well when their candidates seemed to be centrists (Carter in 1976, Clinton, and Gore). When their standard-bearers have come across as liberals (McGovern, Carter in 1980, Mondale, Dukakis, and Kerry), they have been beaten, and often by a good margin.

Howard E. Negrin is just plain wrong with respect to the two issues on which he accuses me of making low attacks. The Swift Boat Veterans for Truth ran nine ads during the campaign. Only one challenged Kerry's war record. The other eight were about his antiwar activities. As for bin Laden's statement in effect endorsing Kerry, Mr. Negrin finds MEMRI's translation "hard to accept," but he offers no linguistic grounds for this judgment. I do not speak or read Arabic, and neither, apparently, does Mr. Negrin; but I have checked with people who do, and they verify MEMRI's version. Bin Laden referred to *wilayat*, a word often used specifically for American states. The word for state as a synonym for country is *ammah* or *dawlah*.

In his directive to the ABC staff, Mark Halperin wrote:

> Kerry distorts, takes out of context, and mistakes all the time, but these are not central to his efforts to win. We have a responsibility to hold both sides accountable to the public interest, but that doesn't mean we reflexively and artificially hold both sides "equally" accountable when the facts don't warrant that.
>
> I'm sure many of you have this week felt the stepped-up Bush efforts to complain about our coverage. This is all part of their efforts to get away with as much as possible with the stepped-up, renewed efforts to win the election by destroying Senator Kerry at least partly through distortions.

Exit polls found that many more voters thought Kerry had attacked Bush unfairly than the other way around, but in Halperin's judgment Bush's distortions were somehow worse than Kerry's. Therefore he ordered ABC to make stronger efforts to rebut Bush than Kerry. If that is not bias, I would be interested to hear Seth Seifman explain what is.

My thanks to Ron Adolph for his very kind words and his interesting comments. With Gil Borman I have no argument. Finally, to Patrick Reddy I say . . . oops (and thanks for correcting the record).

After Arafat

TO THE EDITOR:

Efraim Karsh's powerful analysis makes clear that Yasir Arafat lives on in the culture of hatred and violence he fashioned to serve his terrorist war against Israel ["Arafat Lives," January]. Mahmoud Abbas, his successor, views terror as counterproductive for now, but he has declared that he will not disarm Hamas and Islamic Jihad, and he appears to share Arafat's goal of replacing Israel with Palestine.

Contrary to what the *New York Times* and many

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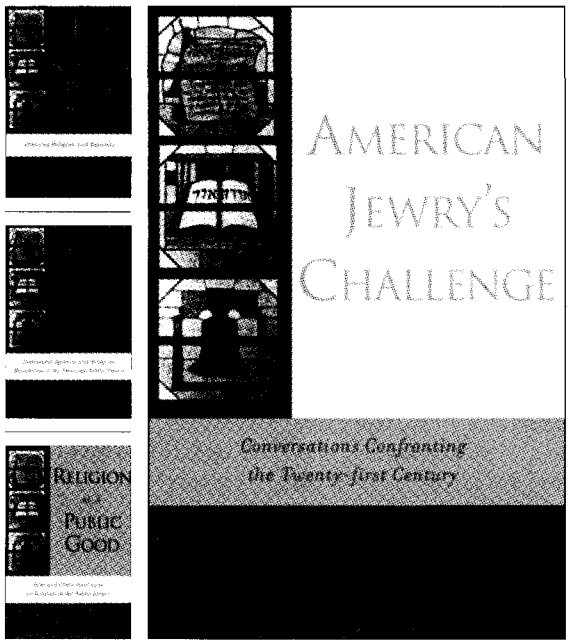

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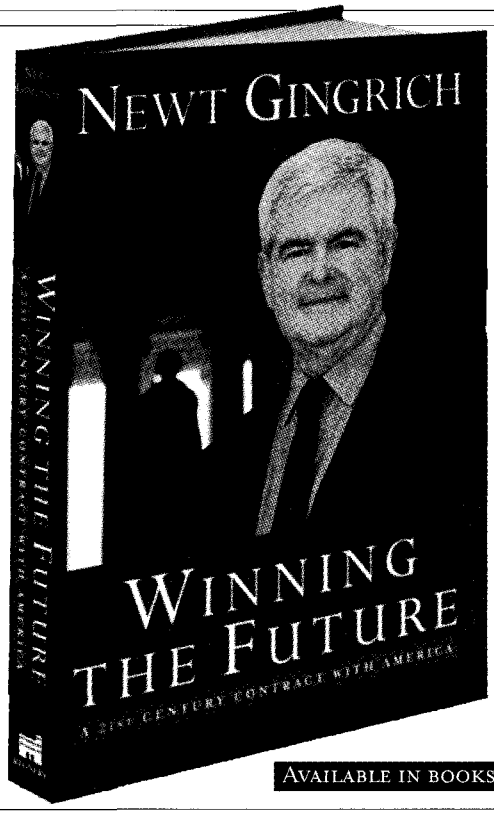

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European capitals insist, the road to peace in the greater Middle East is no more likely now than before to "go through Jerusalem." They assume that solving the problem of Palestinian statelessness would end conflict in the region and its attendant dangers to the West. But, as Mr. Karsh shows, this is worse than false; it masks a serious misapprehension of the real threat facing us from radical Islam.

By vaulting past Jerusalem to Baghdad, President Bush's approach to peace in the Middle East comprehends this threat and counters it. If freedom within a confederated democratic structure can be defended in Iraq by the improbable combination of Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds, then radical Islam will be seriously weakened in its heartland; suppressed Iranians could be inspired to turn out their fundamentalist rulers. The Palestinians, by contrast, remain captive to their terrorist masters, who are protected for now by the veneer of democratic elections. As Mr. Karsh suggests, Israel will need to keep its defenses strong.

MICHAEL BALCH
Iowa City, Iowa

TO THE EDITOR:

I agree with the main thesis of Efraim Karsh's article, but his assumption that Egypt launched the 1973 Yom Kippur war with Israel "against the wishes and advice of the Soviet Union" is mistaken.

Prior to the war, the Soviet Union supplied both Syria and Egypt with SAM-6 anti-aircraft missile systems, modern T-62 tanks, and Sagger anti-tank missiles, all in great profusion. Egypt's strategy for the war involved crossing the Suez Canal, stopping, and building strong defensive positions—on the classic Soviet model. If the Soviet Union was against war, why did it supply the equipment and the offensive doctrine that made it possible?

HAROLD BERNARD REISMAN
Carlsbad, California

EFRAIM KARSH writes:

It gives me no pleasure to be a Cassandra, and I will gladly concede error should Mahmoud Abbas prove a genuine peacemaker, leading the Palestinians to a lasting reconciliation with their Israeli neighbors. Yet, as is aptly noted by Michael Balch, the euphoria attending the recent lull in the fighting seems largely premature.

The Sharm el-Sheikh summit between Abbas and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was certainly a new beginning. But there have been many new beginnings to this conflict; what is needed is a new end. That depends overwhelmingly on the Palestinian militant groups hanging up their guns or on Abbas making them do so. This was a key condition not only of the "road map" but also of the five agreements Yasir Arafat signed with Israel between 1993 and 2000. So long as this precondition is not met, there will be no end to the Palestinian-Israeli dispute. Nor will there develop a functioning Palestinian civil society, let alone a viable state, for the simple reason that all territorial states rely on the rule of law and central control over the means of violence.

Harold Bernard Reisman wonders why the Soviets armed the Arabs to the teeth prior to the 1973 Yom Kippur war if they were opposed to the outbreak of hostilities. The answer is that cheap arms supplies were the only way for the Soviets to compete with the economically superior West for power and influence in the Middle East. But this by no means implied an interest in a regional conflagration. The Soviets were highly skeptical of the Arabs' fighting capabilities, and feared that a new war would result in yet another catastrophe along the lines of June 1967, one that might hamper the course of détente with the U.S., tarnish the prestige of Soviet weaponry, and drive the Arabs to conclude that the path to regaining their lost territories passed through Washington rather than Moscow.

In the early 1970's, when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat began threatening Israel with war, the Soviets were greatly alarmed. For over a year they denied Egypt vital arms supplies, thus frustrating its military preparations and forcing Sadat to postpone his campaign. In July 1972 Sadat retaliated by expelling Soviet military personnel from Egypt; the Soviets resumed arms deliveries, though not at the scope or pace Sadat desired, while simultaneously trying to persuade the Arabs of the benefits of a negotiated settlement.

In May 1973, Moscow scored its greatest success by convincing Egypt and Syria to postpone their joint attack—planned for that month—until after the June summit meeting between Secretary-General Leonid Brezhnev and President Richard Nixon. After that meeting, they again tried to fend off the impending conflict by means of a steady stream of public and private warnings. When all these efforts proved unavailing, they made a last-ditch attempt to alert Israel to the imminence of war, taking the unprecedented step of withdrawing their civilian dependents from Egypt and Syria in a massive air- and sea-lift on October 4. Unfortunately, Israeli intelligence failed to read this last in a long series of handwritings on the wall; hostilities broke out two days later.

Sartre vs. Camus

TO THE EDITOR:

It is not easy for a philosopher to respond to an article that is unphilosophical in tone and often ideological in content. But Algis Valiunas's "Sartre vs. Camus" [January] deserves a response, if only for his immoderate contentions and his expressed hatred for Jean-Paul Sartre. According to Mr. Valiunas, Sartre's embrace of socialism—rooted, he suggests, in a godless and misguided existentialism—polluted all that he had to say. But Mr. Valiunas's own intense ideological bias is evident throughout his article.

Suggesting that Sartre's concept of freedom had "Marxist underpinnings," Mr. Valiunas favors Albert Camus's "more accommodating basis for the idea of complete freedom of choice." Mr. Valiunas is confused about the meaning of freedom for the two thinkers. Even in Sartre's early stage, "absolute" or "complete" freedom was always related to the "given" or "brute existent"—i.e., it

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was always "situated," and did not guarantee "success" in making of oneself whatever one wanted. Mr. Valiunas replicates Camus's misinterpretation of Sartre in *The Myth of Sisyphus* where, indirectly criticizing the other writer, Camus asked, "What freedom can exist in the fullest sense without assurance of eternity?"

Similarly, Mr. Valiunas fails to understand Sartre's distinction between ontological freedom (the freedom to which we, as humans, are condemned) and existential or practical freedom (our ability to practice that freedom). More than Camus, Sartre gave freedom a central place in his philosophical thought. It was Camus, not Sartre, who said that there "comes a time when justice demands the suspension of freedom."

Criticizing Sartre for extolling violence, "being careless with other men's blood," and being willing to use "slave labor" as means to achieve his "socialist fantasy," Mr. Valiunas seems unaware of Sartre's early statements that "violence, under whatever form it may show, is a setback," and that terrorist violence is a "dead end," an "experience that can benefit no one." To be sure, Sartre is ambivalent on the subject. But he imposed severe restrictions on the use of terror (as in his Rome lecture of 1964) or virtually rejected violence altogether (as in his *Hope Now* interview of 1980).

Following Camus, Mr. Valiunas also attacks Sartre for approving of the Soviet slave camps. But in 1950, two years before the Sartre-Camus "confrontation," Sartre spoke critically of those camps. And in the confrontation, he acknowledged their "inadmissibility." I would hesitate to defend Sartre's fellow-traveling with the French Communist party, but Mr. Valiunas ignores part of the picture. In 1952, Sartre referred to Stalinism as "the gravedigger of the proletariat"—a comment that falsifies Camus's contention that a "contradiction" prevented Sartre from speaking out against Stalinism.

Mr. Valiunas suggests that Sartre's pro-Communist sympathies led him to complicity with anti-Jewish and anti-Israel causes. But in the 1970's, for example, Sartre opposed the UN-supported view that Zionism is a form of racism, and in 1976 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for his persistent struggle against anti-Semitism and for his support of the Jewish state.

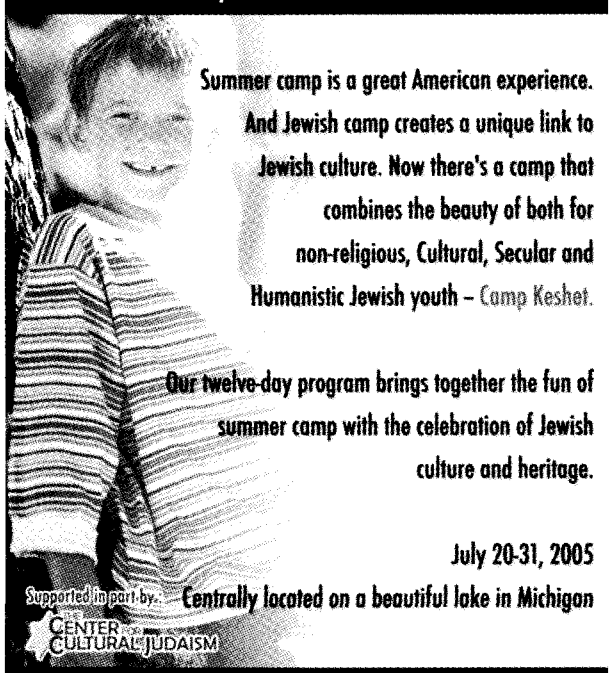
In sum, Mr. Valiunas is not sufficiently aware of the ambivalence and ambiguities in Sartre's philosophical trajectory. Sartre was the towering philosophical figure of the 20th century. Even more than Camus, he consistently came down on the side of the oppressed, downtrodden, and marginalized "wretched of the earth." His mistakes were often related to this admirable quality. Camus may be the more inspiring figure, but Sartre, more than Camus, continues to challenge complacency.

RONALD E. SANTONI
Denison University
Granville, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR:

There is an obvious subtext to Algis Valiunas's blinkered treatment of Sartre and Camus and of

"I'm culturally Jewish, but I'm not religious... what do my kids do this summer?"



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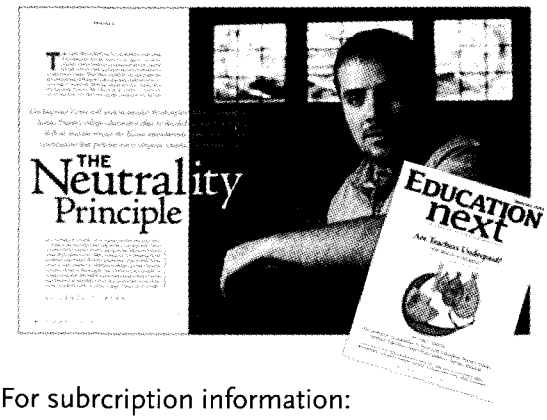

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the recently published books about them that he discusses. Mr. Valiunas views the United States as the sole guardian of human values in the postwar era. He cannot brook criticism of its policies by Sartre, who favored "socialist" dictatorships.

The editors (of whom I am one) of *Sartre and Camus: A Historic Confrontation*, which Mr. Valiunas criticizes, attempted to understand the cold-war period not in terms of whether the West, particularly the United States, was "really more culpable" than the Soviet Union. Our focus was on how best to situate Camus and Sartre within that conflict; though it may be infuriating to Mr. Valiunas, neither writer had any great admiration for Washington's policies.

As for Sartre's philosophy, it is sheer nonsense to state that his existentialism "ends in a socialist fantasy because it begins in a socialist fantasy." Sartre did not become a serious student of Marxism until after the publication of *Being and Nothingness* in 1943. Prior to that, he found his inspiration in German thinkers like Husserl and Heidegger.

Obsessed with the American "war" against Islamic fundamentalist terror, Mr. Valiunas regards Camus's valiant attempt to foster a compromise during the French war in Algeria war as "naïve," and he sneers at Sartre for siding with those who favored an Algeria free and independent of its colonial masters. It is true, as Mr. Valiunas so eagerly states, that today's Algeria is not free, but one of Sartre's basic beliefs was precisely that no one is able to predict the future. Mr. Valiunas, by contrast, clearly knows which side he is on and is not about to let facts get in the way of his version of events.

Mr. Valiunas concludes by claiming that Sartre's ambition was to "explain the world as nobody had adequately explained it before," and that this resulted in "encyclopedic fatuity," whereby "Sartre knew everything, and everything he knew was wrong." Indeed, Sartre challenged many great figures—from Flaubert to Marx, to Freud and his own contemporaries—and he was sometimes wrong. But his plays, novels, criticism, biographies, and political and philosophical writings contain such brilliant commentary and understanding that they led Bernard-Henri Lévy to see in Sartre the dominant literary and intellectual figure of the 20th century. The work of a writer of such stature deserves careful scrutiny and intelligent argument rather than Mr. Valiunas's vapid dismissals.

Finally, it seems particularly graceless that a journal dealing with Jewish issues would print an article on Sartre that ignores Sartre's lifetime sympathy for Israel's *legitimate* goals. Is this but another example of historical revisionism that right-wing Americans are prone to?

A. VAN DEN HOVEN
University of Windsor
Windsor, Canada

TO THE EDITOR:

Algis Valiunas summarizes Albert Camus's indictment of the "highest form of modern criminality: mass murder on behalf of noble ideas, and specifically on behalf of the idea of a perfected humanity." Reading this, I could not help thinking of the current adventure in Iraq, in which an estimated 100,000 civilians have thus far been killed.

How much liberal democracy will Iraq need to achieve before we can say that it was worth the cost? Unfortunately, ideologues of the Right and the Left are identical in their indifference to the numbers of individual lives lost or saved.

NEIL FORD
Sidney, Australia

TO THE EDITOR:

Regarding the significance of Sartre and Camus to the Left, may I call to the attention of your readers a book by Jacques and Claudie Broyelle, *Illusions retrouvées: Sartre a toujours raison contre Camus* ("Recovered Illusions: Sartre Is Always in the Right Against Camus")?

This is an unjustly neglected classic. Written from personal experience—the authors started out as Maoists and lived in China for several years—and deep familiarity with the French Left, it combines valuable information, razor-sharp insight, and long stretches of indescribably marvelous humor and irony.

ARTHUR WALDRON
Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

ALGIS VALIUNAS writes:

When someone announces with full pomp that he is a philosopher, watch out: he is usually about to disgrace the truth he professes to value. Ronald E. Santoni's critique of my critique of Sartre on freedom is so slapdash and incoherent that one trembles for philosophy.

I would never say, and neither did Camus, that true freedom "guarantee[s] 'success'" in becoming whatever one wants to be. No one is guaranteed success in anything, much less in the supremely difficult enterprise of making one's soul, or one's self. What I do say is that, for Sartre, the only self worth making is one committed to socialism and detesting bourgeois life. As Camus recognized, this cuts down one's possibilities severely—to the point where Sartre is hardly talking of anything that can legitimately be called freedom at all.

Mr. Santoni's citation of Camus's "misinterpretation of Sartre in *The Myth of Sisyphus*" is a red herring. An essential point of Camus's teaching is that there is *no* "assurance of eternity." To need such assurance, Camus writes, is but a way-station on the path to the absurd freedom that his essay describes and advocates—the freedom of a man who knows that this life is all there is and directs his actions accordingly.

As for ontological and existential freedom, man is indeed condemned to freedom in Sartre's world; since there is no God or human nature, the individual is entirely responsible for what he makes of himself. That is the premise of Sartrean existentialism. Its conclusion is this (from "Existentialism Is a Humanism"): "And when we say that a man is responsible for himself, we do not only mean that he is responsible for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men."

This is shoddy reasoning in the service of a political program. Somehow, although there is no acknowledged categorical im-

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perative, each individual must act as though his choice were imperative for all. Thus an absolute relativism is made to seem the root of a universal moral truth: the supreme justice of the socialist brotherhood. The consequences of this line of thinking are patent. Throughout his life, Sartre supported those dictatorships where freedom was not only abrogated but savagely suppressed precisely in the name of this supposed justice, and he condemned the bourgeois democracies where freedom supposedly sanctified injustice.

Sartre did have critical things to say about Stalinism, as Mr. Santoni points out. But in the end he so loathed bourgeois democracy that he had to take the side of the Stalinists against it. As he wrote in *The Spectre of Stalin*, "Must socialism be called that bloody monster which tears itself to pieces? I answer candidly: yes. That was socialism even in its primitive phase; there has been no other, and it must be desired as it is or not at all." Despite the occasional ambivalence or ambiguity in Sartre's political views on socialist terror, this was always his fundamental position.

There are many, including not a few of those conservatives Mr. Santoni finds so disagreeable, who care a great deal for the wretched of the earth; and those who truly care for them know better than to consign their salvation to socialist revolutionaries and tyrants. Dickens and Disraeli were finer moralists in this respect than Marx, and Franklin D. Roosevelt was a rather more compassionate champion of the downtrodden than Lenin, Stalin, Mao, or Castro. The "towering philosophical figure of the 20th century" ought to have appreciated such moral distinctions. Sartre, who said famously that "an anti-Communist is a dog"—and the preponderant quality of whose moral and political thought is encapsulated in that observation—was not that figure. Although he clearly had the requisite power of mind, it was joined to an overwhelming hatefulness that disabled his rare intelligence and made him what he was: the 20th century's most brilliant political hack.

To turn to A. Van den Hoven, I certainly do not view the United States "as the sole guardian of human values in the postwar era"; but the unfree peoples of the Soviet empire would never have gained their freedom without it. Political men in the postwar era had to choose between liberal democracy and Communism. Sartre employed the freedoms of liberal democracy to espouse the moral superiority of Communist tyranny. Mr. Van den Hoven suggests that the socialist dictatorships favored by Sartre served "human values" as well as the United States and its democratic allies did; but he is careful not to mention any by name. The Soviet Union? China? Cuba?

If I am still fighting the cold war some days, so are Mr. Van den Hoven and some of his colleagues, from the other side. In an essay included in Mr. Van den Hoven's book, William L. McBride philosophizes that "murderous tendencies were hardly confined to one side of the cold-war equation." To the untrained mind, the fact that the Soviet government murdered at least 20 million of its own citizens would seem to tilt the balance strongly in one direction, but the famous even-handedness of the intellectual Left rises above such petty distinctions. By contrast, McBride sees Albert Camus as abetting democratic murderousness, by carrying on about the "murderous logic" of Communism; if intellectuals and politicians had taken Camus seriously, McBride opines, Armageddon would surely have ensued. Evidently, in the eyes of Sartre's admirers, an anti-Communist is still a dog.

Was I talking "sheer nonsense" about the socialist basis of Sartrean existentialism, as Mr. Van de Hoven suggests, because Sartre did not become "a serious student of Marxism" until after he had laid the existentialist foundation? But he did not have to be a serious student of Marxism, whatever that means, to absorb its fundamental tenets. And those tenets underlay his existentialist philosophizing. The political ends he sought shaped his metaphysical assumptions.

About Algeria: it is true enough that Sartre believed the future is to be made by human choice and is therefore unpredictable. I entirely agree; but the future I would choose looks little like Sartre's preference. In any case, one makes choices with some care for their possible consequences, and neither Sartre nor Camus demonstrated the necessary prudence on this score. The evidence for their failure can be seen in what actually ensued from those choices.

As for Sartre and the Jews, I said only good things in my essay about his defense of the Jews—so long as they are not bourgeois Jews, who are legitimate candidates for elimination under socialist justice. About Sartre and Israel, I shall quote Edward Said, whom I would guess Mr. Van den Hoven considers a reliable witness. Having attended a 1979 colloquium in Paris, "Peace Today," where Sartre was the star attraction, Said reported that "his speech was a series of platitudes: ritualistic, emotionless formulas that gave us all—Palestinians and Israelis alike—the sad impression that we were perceived as subhumans."

To Neil Ford: there may be some supporters of the Iraq war who are indifferent to Iraqi suffering and death; I do not know any myself. But I remind Mr. Ford that Saddam Hussein's mass graves held some 300,000 Iraqi Shiite corpses, and that another million Iraqis and Iranians died in Saddam's adventure against Iran. It might seem morally crass to say that a toll of 100,000 dead in a war of liberation sounds not half so bad as over a million dead at a tyrant's whim; but there it is. Many Iraqis, while mourning their recent losses, agree.

The book kindly recommended by Arthur Waldron sounds like one I will have to read.

Health Care

TO THE EDITOR:

In his review of *Miracle Cure* by Sally Pipes, Jonathan Kay describes health care in Canada as "often second-rate" by American standards [Books in Review, January]. This may be true, but the

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quality of a nation's health care cannot be judged simply by the way medical services are provided or by the length of waiting periods for treatment. The ultimate measure is the citizenry's life expectancy and quality of life. As far as I know, no one claims that these are superior in the U.S.

I was surprised to find no mention in the review of one major factor in the huge and escalating costs of health care—namely, malpractice litigation. We are often given data about the high costs of such litigation in plaintiffs' awards, attorney fees, and courtroom expenses; these are a reasonable burden for us to bear so that injured patients can be compensated. But the legal process involves many other costs that are inflated and unnecessary. To forestall potential lawsuits, doctors make patients undergo countless tests, procedures, and hospital stays. Patients' trust in their doctors diminishes, and the general interest is disregarded.

MOSHE SOREK, M.D.
Fountain Hills, Arizona

JONATHAN KAY writes:

Dr. Sorek is correct: one cannot judge a health-care system on the basis of isolated criteria like the length of waiting lists. But the yardsticks he proposes as alternatives—life expectancy and quality of life—are so broad as to be even more problematic. The United States is a world leader not only in health spending and medical technology but also in obesity, guns, criminal violence, and other factors associated with early death. The fact that the average Canadian lives slightly longer than his American counterpart thus tells us little.

Sally Pipes would agree that frivolous malpractice suits contribute to higher health costs in the U.S. In a chapter of *Miracle Cure* devoted to this issue, she cites a study estimating the cost of excessive litigation at $809 per citizen. As Dr. Sorek suggests, the price is paid not only by doctors but also by patients subjected to batteries of unnecessary blood tests and radiological imaging for no other reason than to indemnify the treating physician.

Canadians are spared this costly annoyance, but not just because liability awards in Canada are rare and modest; there are also not enough diagnostic resources to serve many patients who truly need them. On this score, as with other health issues, the grass is not necessarily greener north of the border. For the many ailing Canadians who have been waiting months for their turn under an MRI machine or CT scanner, the problem of too much treatment is one they would accept in a heartbeat.

A Theological Difference

TO THE EDITOR:

In his review of my book, *Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations*, David Hazony concludes that it "presents a skewed and deeply misleading understanding of the Jewish tradition" and that "the 'promise' of its title does not just remain unfulfilled but is very nearly betrayed" [Books in Review, January]. Mr. Hazony is wrong and uninformed in every criticism he hurls.

Mr. Hazony objects to my claim that the Christian doctrine of the trinity is a problem for Judaism but not a complete break with it. If the latter were the case (as Mr. Hazony thinks), the medieval Jewish authorities would have declared Christianity a form of idolatry. But the consensus of Jewish rabbinic opinion is that, at least for Gentiles, Christianity is a monotheistic faith.

Maimonides went so far as to assert that Christianity and Islam "serve to clear the way for king messiah, to prepare the whole world to worship God with one accord" (*Mishneh Torah*, *Melakhim* 11:4, uncensored version). Christianity is even ahead of Islam in one respect: "It is permitted to teach the commandments to Christians and to draw them close to our religion . . . because they believe in the text of the Torah . . . though they frequently interpret it differently" (Responsa, no. 149). The trinity is certainly a serious problem for Judaism, but it does not warrant the severing of Jewish-Christian relations.

When I was asked several years ago to sign *Dabru Emet*, a statement about Jewish-Christian relations signed by rabbis and Jewish theologians, almost all non-Orthodox, I refused. As I explained in a letter to COMMENTARY (April 2002), readers of *Dabru Emet*

> could easily be misled into concluding that there are no really difficult theological differences between [the two] faiths. Two of the most intractable of these are the divinity of Jesus and Christianity's abrogation of Mosaic law—neither of which is mentioned in *Dabru Emet*.

It is ironic that in view of such a published statement and many others, I should now be accused of crypto-Christianity.

Mr. Hazony rejects my claim that "no interpretation of Judaism which is unable to construct a plausible platform for Jewish unity is a viable interpretation of Judaism." He points out that "throughout the ages, Baalists, Sadducees, early Christians, Karaites, Sabbateans, and others were rejected by mainstream Judaism precisely because of their ideological commitments." But Mr. Hazony refuses to face up to the fact that no matter how false the ideology adopted by any Jew may be, he or she remains a Jew. If before Passover I sold my leavened bread to Cardinal Lustiger, the Jewish-born Archbishop of Paris, I would be prohibited from consuming it after Passover because it was always in the possession of a Jew. Ideological differences among Jews are important, but a Reform Jew born to a Jewish mother remains a Jew, regardless of how deeply I disagree with his interpretation of Judaism. That may not appeal to Jewish rationalists, but it is authentic Judaism.

Contrary to Mr. Hazony's claim, I do not maintain that Jewish theology needs Christian theology in order to advance. Jewish theology marches to its own drummer. But this does not mean that Jewish theology cannot learn from Christian, Muslim, and other theologies. Once again, we need to listen to Maimonides, who, as he wrote, gleaned some of his ideas

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"from the words of the philosophers, ancient and recent, and also from the works of various authors, *as one should accept the truth from whatever source it proceeds*" (Foreword, *Eight Chapters*, emphasis added).

In addition to my Torah education, which is at the center of my religious identity, I have learned much from thinkers like Søren Kierkegaard and Karl Barth, not least when I had to formulate a Jewish response to their ideas—just as Maimonides learned from Muslim theologians. I am sorry if this makes Mr. Hazony suspect the purity of my Judaism. A self-confident Judaism—like the Judaism of Maimonides—should not fear interaction with a daughter religion.

MICHAEL WYSCHOGROD
New York City

DAVID HAZONY writes:

Michael Wyschogrod claims that my review of his book is "wrong and uninformed in every criticism," yet he neglects to address my main argument—that in his effort to promote a Judaism that can best interact with Christianity, he distorts central tenets of Jewish faith. His letter also manages to misrepresent both my opinions and his own.

I never claimed, for example, that Jewish-Christian relations should be "severed," or anything similar. On the contrary, I believe that Jews and Christians have a great deal to gain from dialogue and cooperation. Yet it seems intuitive that a *theological* dialogue can be fruitful only if the interlocutors are unembarrassed about what distinguishes the two religions. To downplay the classic Jewish aversion to notions like the multiplicity of God or His incarnation in flesh can only deprive a dialogue of any honest representation of the very tradition it purports to include.

As for his own views, Mr. Wyschogrod claims he does "not maintain that Jewish theology needs Christian theology in order to advance." But that is exactly what he *does* claim, repeatedly, in *Abraham's Promise*. To cite just one example, his essay on the Protestant theologian Karl Barth begins with a sustained account of how his own theology depends on Christian thought: "Christianity," he writes "is heir to an exceedingly rich theological tradition. . . . The result is that a dialogue with Christianity advances Judaism theologically and compels it to examine problems it might not otherwise have done."

There is, of course, nothing wrong with choosing to study other traditions in order to sharpen or deepen one's understanding. But Mr. Wyschogrod takes this a radical step further. As I noted in my review, his central theological proposition—that the Jewish people is not fully distinct from God but possesses "incarnational elements" that are "very real"—is, quite simply, alien to Judaism. It contradicts the straightforward reading of pretty much anything that qualifies as a source of classical Jewish thought.

To all appearances, the Bible, Talmud, midrash, and medieval philosophical sources reject the idea of an incarnate God. To suggest that *Israel*—depicted in the Bible as the paradigm of human fallibility—is in fact a form of God is to upset the biblical scheme of creation, responsibility, and redemption. For this reason, Maimonides, whom Mr. Wyschogrod tries to enlist in his defense, explicitly posits the non-corporeality of God as one of the thirteen core principles of Jewish faith. This was my central criticism of Mr. Wyschogrod's theology, and it is one he leaves unchallenged.

So bound is Mr. Wyschogrod's conception of Judaism to the idea of God's incarnation in the Jewish people that it is no surprise he should view Christianity as fertile ground for Jewish theology. To my claim, for example, that Judaism is built not only on peoplehood but also on important ideas about God and man—such as the unity of the divine, the strict separation between God and creation, the moral underpinnings of the law, and so forth—Mr. Wyschogrod responds lamely that Cardinal Lustiger is still Jewish enough to make Mr. Wyschogrod's leavened bread forbidden after Passover. In his view, it would seem, Judaism *has* very few core ideas of its own. This is evident not only in his insistence that Christianity "advances Judaism theologically" but also in his insistence that Jewish law is devoid of important moral principles or ideals. ("Do I really understand why God wants me not to murder? . . . The moment I refrain from murder on other grounds than that God forbids it, I have embarked on a slippery slope.") It is similarly evident in his assertion that any interpretation of Judaism, regardless of its content, must be considered a part of the religion—a position that has no resonance in either Jewish history or Jewish classical philosophy.

I agree fully with Mr. Wyschogrod's statement that "a self-confident Judaism should not fear interaction with a daughter religion." But which is more likely to foster such confidence: a radical distortion of Judaism, embracing the belief that God became flesh, downplaying rejection of trinity, and denying that Jewish law has any meaning other than obedience, or a straightforward reading of the biblical and talmudic sources that suggests a more robust, independent tradition of Jewish theological and moral thinking?

Ozick/Halkin

TO THE EDITOR:

Hillel Halkin's article, "What Is Cynthia Ozick About?" [January], was outstanding. He demonstrated, more clearly than anyone else has done, why Cynthia Ozick deserves a place in both the pantheon of great American novelists and the pantheon of great American essayists. Penetrating literary analysis of this sort has rarely been seen since the death of Lionel Trilling.

SHALE D. STILLER
Baltimore, Maryland

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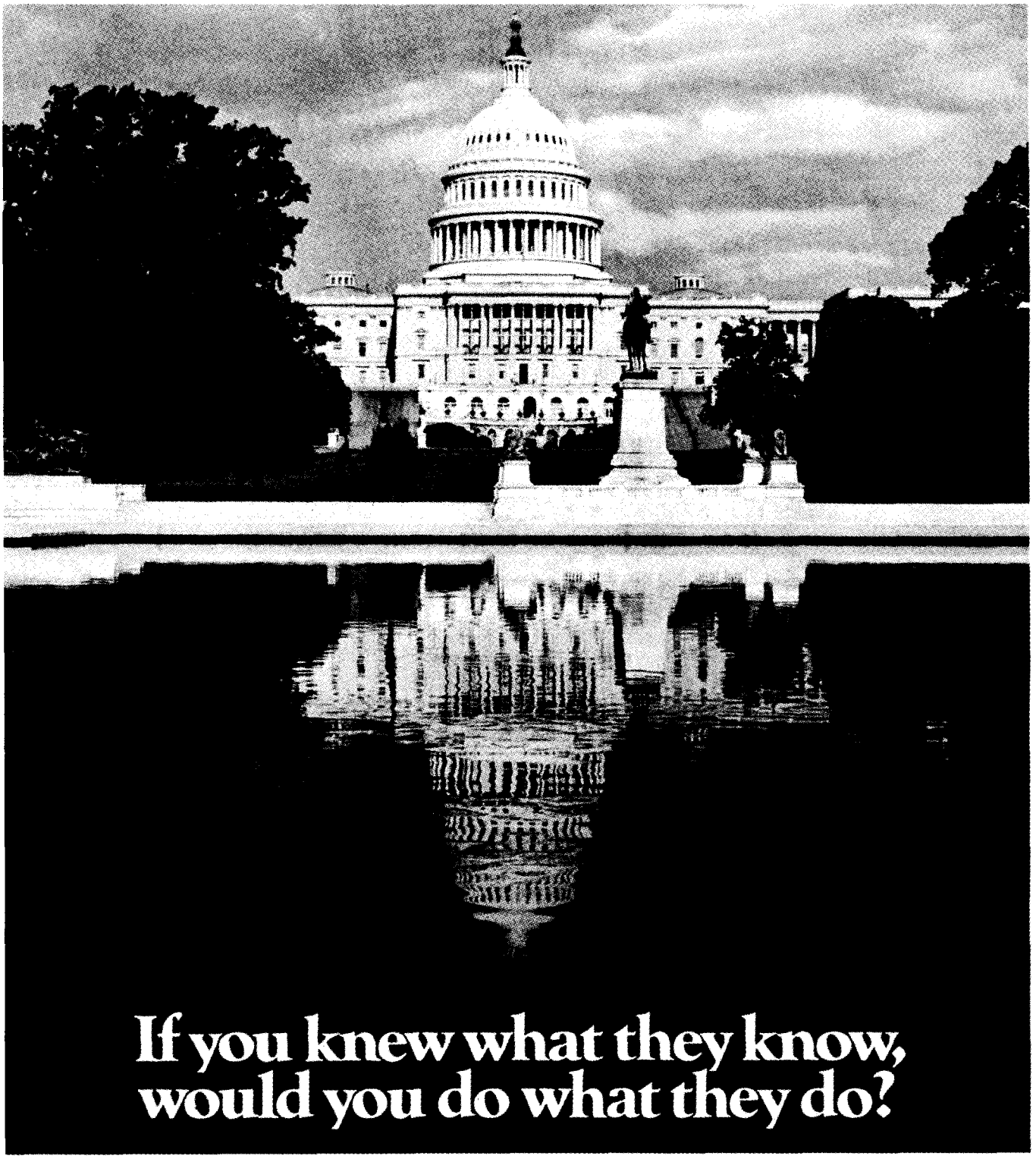

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Commentary
April 2005

"Dear Ellen"; or, Sexual Correctness at Harvard

Ruth R. Wisse

Dear Ellen,

It was great having a chance to catch up with you over lunch today. I don't think we've really seen each other since you graduated from Harvard two years ago, so I had no inkling you were back, and working toward an advanced degree in history. When you were a senior here, you were still toying with the idea of going into law.

But, as you say, that was before you'd decided to get married, or faced the prospect of what it would mean to duplicate the seventy-hour work week of your husband-to-be. Marriage and children (you spoke of them in the plural!) call for more flexible working hours, and I fully agree that a university life, especially one in the humanities, is more compatible than a law partnership with extended motherhood.

Having said that, I can also well imagine how the current controversy swirling around the president of our university, touching as it does on some of your very own conflicts, might feel like an object lesson on how and how not to manage the rest of your life. And I can surely understand how it would have shaken your sense of yourself as (in your own description) a middle-of-the-road liberal.

You said you liked the quotation attributed to me in the newspaper to the effect that women's dilemma is born of choice and freedom. You also told me how dismayed you and your friends were that a talk by Lawrence Summers on this very subject should have created what the *Harvard Crimson* called, in the understatement of the year, "a firestorm of criticism." Of course I share your concern that your professors should be trying to shut down the free exchange of ideas by shutting up one of their own fraternity. But the choices you yourself face in life remain the same no matter who defines them. I'm reminded of one of the jokes we studied in our seminar on Jewish humor. Becky says to Sam, "Close the window. It's cold outside." Sam, after closing the window: "So now it's warm outside?"

As for your suggestion that you and your friends organize a public forum to discuss the issue openly, I'm still not sure what you consider "the issue" to be—sexual equality, tensions in the women's movement, the culture wars being waged at this university and far beyond it, or something else altogether. Do you want to express your sympathy with Summers, to clarify something for yourselves, to influence the course of public discussion? All of the above? Whichever it is, I prefer to put my own thoughts in writing, since it occurs to me that in the current atmosphere I'd be well advised not to follow Summers's example of speaking "off the record."

First, let's be sure we agree on what we've witnessed. On January 14, at the invitation of a fellow economist and former colleague, Summers

Ruth R. Wisse *is Harvard College professor, Martin Peretz professor of Yiddish, and professor of comparative literature at Harvard. She is currently completing a book on Jews and power.*

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addressed a small private conference on "Diversifying the Science and Engineering Workforce" that was sponsored by a local non-profit outfit, the National Bureau of Economic Research. The organizers were responding to statistics showing that, although more women than men now attend university, women are not "represented" in fields like mathematics, engineering, and the physical sciences in proportion to the numbers receiving advanced graduate training. Economists themselves, the conference organizers felt that society was being deprived of a potentially valuable segment of the workforce, and that women who failed to take up professions for which they had been trained were a squandered resource. They invited Summers to speak because they appreciated the way he stimulates debate.

Now that the transcript of his talk has been released, we can see how richly he obliged his hosts—though you are right that there was little in his remarks that others hadn't been saying or speculating about for years (if mostly out of earshot of the country's academic thought police). Nor is Larry Summers the first to point out that, in general, and without causing anyone undue alarm, certain groups just happen to be "underrepresented" in certain activities: Catholics in investment banking, white men in the National Basketball Association, Jews in farming and agriculture. Addressing the specific issue of women in tenured positions in science and engineering at top universities, he then went on to speculate whether this perceived scarcity might be due to—in his declining order of importance—female choices, an unequal distribution of cognitive skills across the sexes, or discrimination. He concluded:

> So my best guess, to provoke you, of what's behind all of this is that the largest phenomenon, by far, is the general clash between people's legitimate family desires and employers' current desire for high power and high intensity, that in the special case of science and engineering there are issues of intrinsic aptitude, and particularly of the variability of aptitude, and that those considerations are reinforced by what are in fact lesser factors involving socialization and continuing discrimination. I would like nothing better than to be proved wrong, because I would like nothing better than for these problems to be addressable simply by everybody understanding what they are, and working very hard to address them.

"To provoke you" was right. In suggesting a statistical disparity caused by neutral and possibly intractable factors in human nature, Summers was fluttering straight into the jaws of political correctness. In particular, he was flouting the feminist claim that at the root of any and all discrepancies in female employment figures there lies—in a word—discrimination. Given the reception that routinely greets any social scientist who thinks out loud about genetic variations, you have to admit that it was pretty gutsy, or reckless, of Summers to air this possibility of a "variabliliy of aptitude," even at a supposedly closed meeting, let alone to bring up the subject of women's voluntary life choices. In any event, it did not take long for him to reap the rewards of his candor.

On January 17, three days after his talk, the *Boston Globe* ran a story featuring the response to it by a professor of biology at MIT, Nancy Hopkins, who had stalked out of the meeting straight into the arms of reporters. "This kind of bias," she expostulated, "makes me physically sick." Without pausing to question whether bias has in fact been at work in Harvard's hiring practices, the *Globe* simply reminded its readers that the number of tenured job offers to women had "dropped dramatically since Summers took office"; the inference was unmistakable.

Here I can't help mentioning that, already prior to this incident, a caucus of senior women faculty had lobbied Harvard's president to address what it considered evidence of discrimination on his watch—and that Summers had accepted its demands by creating a task force to deal with the alleged problem it identified. In short, even before he dared venture what he ventured on January 14, he had conceded the argument by pledging to implement more strenuous group preferences. The door had thus been opened, and it was no wonder that the women's caucus, now encouraged by the media, proceeded to press its advantage, upping the ante by casting Summers as not only a functional antagonist of women but an ideological one—as, in short, a sexist.

THE TACTIC succeeded wildly. As you well know, Summers had attracted his share of enemies in his few years at Harvard, being the first president in four decades to challenge, however gingerly, the near-hegemony of the liberal and radical Left on campus. You're familiar with the major controversies: he precipitated the departure to Princeton of Cornel West, a professor of African-American studies, whom he chided privately for neglecting his academic duties; he was known to be in favor of restoring the Reserve Officers Training

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Program (ROTC), which in a fit of anti-military spite the faculty had banned from the campus in 1968; he stopped in its tracks a petition urging the Harvard endowment fund to divest from Israel, stating that "profoundly anti-Israel views are increasingly finding support in progressive intellectual communities"; and, following a long campaign by Harvey Mansfield, Harvard's most prominent conservative, he persuaded the faculty to apply stricter standards in grading.

For these and similar reasons, Mansfield himself would conclude that the latest furor over Summers, unleashed in its full ugliness at a packed faculty meeting on February 15, was about the things the president had done right rather than about the things he had done wrong. "The liberals of Harvard lost the national election last November," cracked Mansfield, "They are taking it out on Larry Summers."

But here we come to the most intriguing question you raised at lunch: why did Summers feel it necessary to *apologize*, as he did repeatedly the minute the first newspaper reports appeared, and then again in facing the faculty on February 15, and then again and even more abjectly at a second faculty meeting a week later? Why didn't he defend his views, or at least his right to express them? After all, this is a man who had served as Secretary of the Treasury in the Clinton administration. He had seen how a President who *had* treated women shabbily had not only defied his critics but won the grudging respect of the country for brazening it out. Why should Summers, the lord of a much smaller fiefdom, apologize for a mistake that you and I and many others didn't think he had made in the first place?

National Review called his ordeal "a feminist show trial." An East Asian historian compared it to a Communist Chinese "struggle session." Both these descriptions suggest that, in apologizing for his sins, Summers had been forced to yield to a mob. Others have speculated that members of the Harvard Corporation and the board of overseers, who in the end determine a president's fate, insisted that he damp the fires. If so, his capitulation would have been nothing more than a desperate man's attempt to hold on to his job.

Frankly, I question both of these scenarios. Larry Summers may be no Captain Dreyfus, but I think that, had he considered himself innocent, he would have stood his ground. In my opinion, the truly ghastly aspect of this whole affair is that the accused man actually believed he had committed an offense. Summers apologized not because, like Nikolai Bukharin, he was forced to, but because he was convinced he had done something wrong.

And what was that? "I deeply regret the impact of my comments and apologize for not having weighed them more carefully," the president wrote in a letter to his faculty:

> I have learned a great deal from all that I have heard in the last few days. The many compelling e-mails and calls that I have received have made vivid the very real barriers faced by women in pursuing scientific and other academic careers. They have also powerfully underscored the imperative of providing strong and unequivocal encouragement to girls and young women interested in science. . . . I was wrong to have spoken in a way that has resulted in an unintended signal of discouragement to talented girls and women.

I see no reason to doubt Summers's sincerity; he usually says what he means and means what he says. Taking him at his word, then, I conclude that he was not sorry for having offended liberal orthodoxy; he was sorry, genuinely so, for having given some sort of offense to women, for sending them "an unintended signal of discouragement." Having first done our sex the courtesy of treating us as peers, he was now determined to treat us as a victimized species. Henceforth, he would tailor his thoughts to the ability of women to bear the hearing of them.

Not only did the president apologize, he rolled out a six-point program that would make affirmative action for women a top priority in hiring and promotion at Harvard. To anyone who has followed the career of group preferences in America, the process at work here was depressingly familiar. First come the threats—in this case, the tears—of the designated victims; then come the anguished efforts of well-meaning liberals to alleviate the pain; then follows, inevitably, the stirring of further, unappeasable resentments. "The person one pities is a person one may like but does not truly respect," writes John W. McWhorter, one of a number of courageous blacks who have seen through the misplaced charitable inclinations that lie behind the American regime of affirmative action, and the web of lies and crippling self-deceptions that ensues from it.

But the exploitability of liberal white guilt is as nothing compared with the exploitability of liberal male guilt. Through their accusations of bias, through their testimonies of suffering and of hurt

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feelings, the tenured women of Harvard vaulted to the top of the heap of the truly disadvantaged, including, it seems, in the eyes of the man they had laughably named as their chief oppressor.

IF YOU were ever tempted to work up a historical study of this episode, you would discover, Ellen, that the drive for "gender equality" at Harvard began in 1971. That is when, following the example of several other elite universities, the faculty of arts and sciences endorsed the major conclusion of its committee on the status of women that "the number of women on the faculty must be increased":

> The committee felt that within five years Harvard ought to be able to achieve a percentage of women in junior faculty appointments equal to the percentage of Ph.D.'s currently being granted to women at Harvard. It was also the committee's feeling that progress ought to be made toward achieving a number of senior professional appointments going to women, equal to the number of women Ph.D.'s awarded a decade before.

This assumed correlation between opportunity and outcome was of course qualified by the pious reminder that "appointments of women, as those of men, would continue to be made on merit." But whether or not that criterion remained in force, the greater problem facing Harvard's engineers of "gender equality" was that the pool of women in the humanities was far larger than the pool of women in mathematics and the sciences. As a result, although women today comprise almost a fourth of the Harvard faculty, they are very unevenly distributed among the disciplines.

Not so surprising, you say. After all, in the world outside the university, women have crowded into a "soft" industry like book publishing but very few have started up their own dot-coms or hedge funds. Unfortunately, what you find unsurprising others find a source of outrage. Rather than investigating, in a spirit of free inquiry, the possible causes for this uneven distribution, the same Harvard committee, still standing after all these decades, is now agitating to eliminate it forthwith.

Indeed, the legacy of that 1971 committee on the status of women may be the most damaging remnant of the radical movement that once overran our culture and is still ensconced in power at Harvard and other universities. Let me try to spell out the enduring nature of the damage.

The very notion that "women" have an "agenda" of their own puts them at odds with the common academic purpose. But an adversarial committee stays in business by thinking and acting adversarially; and the longer it stays in business, the more implacable become both its resentments and its demands. In creating the standing committee, the Harvard faculty fashioned a permanent source of institutional discontent.

As for an ideal of equality based on equal outcomes, it not only sabotages equal opportunity but engenders a system that corrupts everyone who participates in it. Consider the practicalities: when a department is hiring, say, an assistant professor, a typical pool of applicants may comprise 60 men and 25 women. Directives from the dean's office having urged preferential consideration of women, the department knows that a short list of four candidates, equally divided between men and women, will stand a better chance of preliminary approval than a list weighted toward men. (No one would *consider* submitting a list without women on it, even if that means having to beg a female candidate to apply.)

What happens when the four arrive and are duly interviewed? One way or another, the committees appointed to promote female hiring will need to be shown results. If there is a clear female favorite, the problem is solved. If there is a clear male favorite, he will probably be hired—but only probably. If there is no clear favorite, a decisive argument will be advanced in favor of one of the two women; after all, as a colleague of mine put it candidly at a recent departmental deliberation, this will "win us high points with the administration."

But that is not the end of the corruption. The women's caucus at Harvard, which boasts of representing 90 percent of the senior female faculty, claims to be fighting for "diversity." There are currently 86 tenured female professors in the arts and sciences at Harvard; there may be a tenth that number of tenured Republicans, male or female. By substituting sexual for intellectual or any other kind of diversity, feminist watchdogs have already done their bit to help create Harvard's notoriously monolithic faculty.

On no subject, finally, is uniformity imposed more rigidly than on the women's question. I may be (as someone asserted) the only female among the senior faculty who thinks the university should guarantee equal treatment to all candidates for every position in every department, and that women deserve no more special consideration in hiring than veterans, the disabled, or reformed prisoners. (I doubt I'm the only one, but the proposition has yet to be tested.) Of course, I freely

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concede that the university has the right to promulgate any policy it chooses. But who has given the standing committee on women—a non-academic, non-elective, heavily politicized body—the right to bill itself as *the* women's point of view, or to advocate university policy in my name? So much for the free marketplace of ideas.

Did you happen to attend the recent panel discussion on "Women and Tenure at Harvard"? Leaving nothing to chance, the poster for the event announced its goals in advance: "(1) Create awareness about the lack of women in tenured positions at Harvard University; (2) Promote networks between Harvard students and faculty; (3) Strengthen the community of women at Harvard; (4) Advocate for change to increase the number of female faculty at Harvard." Billed as a discussion, it was more like a rally, sponsored by the largest consortium of groups (most of them funded by the university) I have ever seen on this campus: the Association of Black Harvard Women; Athena Theater Company; the Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian, Transgender, and Supporters Alliance; the Black Students Association; Delta Gamma; Fuerza Latina; the Harvard Society of Black Scientists and Engineers; Harvard Undergraduate Women in Business; the Harvard-Radcliffe Asian American Association; Hillel Sisterhood; Isis; Kappa Alpha Theta; Kappa Kappa Gamma; Pleiades; the Race, Culture, and Diversity Initiative; the Radcliffe Union of Students; the Sabliere Society; the Society of Physics Students; Strong Women Strong Girls; Women in Color; Women and Youth Supporting Each Other; Women in Science at Radcliffe-Harvard; the Women's Leadership Project; and the Committee for the Equality of Women at Harvard. The host, a sorority called Seneca, is best known for its tailgate parties after major football games; its support only confirmed the utter correctness, the irreproachable virtue, of the cause.

If you want to know why there haven't been many debates like the one you want to organize, start with this rally. At lunch you said to me, "Maybe if others had been arguing over these issues, Summers's opinions wouldn't have caused such a furor." You're right, but you seem to be missing the point. As a student of history, you've surely learned that revolutionary Marxism marched under the banner of historical determinism. Its analysis of capitalism was not merely one hypothesis among several; it was the only valid analysis, and it offered the only valid solution to the evil it described. Militant feminists likewise regard their case against the "patriarchy" as irrefutable; they certainly do not consider they have anything so tentative or discussable as an *opinion*. (I remind you that the current campaign was launched by senior women faculty who successfully accused the Harvard administration of bias without citing a single case in support of their allegation.)

If you and your friends were now to challenge this dogmatism, you would be undertaking to resume the discussion Larry Summers thought it better to close down, taking up the battle he chose not to fight. The proposition? "Resolved: Discrimination Is the Major Cause of Women's Underrepresentation at the Top of Certain Fields." You would be arguing the negative, helped perhaps by a few brave souls like the evolutionary psychologist Steven Pinker, who might be able to offer a sophisticated explanation for disparities in cognitive abilities between the sexes. (Not that you, or I, would necessarily support his hypothesis.) On the affirmative side would be all the sponsors of that rally, plus their myriad fellow-travelers.

Aggrieved sisterhood is indeed powerful. But we know that already—and we also know that the rawer the grievance, the weaker the arguments. So I'm with you: this fight is worth having, as long as you understand the nature of the playing field. Among the weapons available to you are those weak arguments on the other side, plus the failed record of past efforts to pretend that sexual differences do not exist, or must not be allowed to count.

That record is very instructive. Twenty or twenty-five years ago, there were substantial increases in the number of American women in graduate school. These women are now in their forties or early fifties. But where are they? If you look at the faculties in various academic fields—not just the sciences—where women once formed over a third of those in graduate training, they are not to be found in anything like comparable numbers. Among the relatively few at the top, moreover, a disproportionate number are either unmarried or childless.

It is therefore reasonable to assume that many if not most of these women, especially the ones who wanted to run a home and raise a family, chose not to pursue careers that would demand long hours of intense dedication during their peak child-bearing years. This is, in effect, Summers's "high-powered-job" hypothesis. He was talking about your predecessors—and about you.

Indeed, many things have happened since the advent of women's "liberation" to complicate its peculiar idea of progress, and one of those things is

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that the ideological drive for equality has outstripped many women's enthusiasm for the project. As the columnist David Brooks has reminded us, the fraction of women over the age of forty and without children has nearly doubled over the past quarter-century, to about a fifth of the cohort. According to the Gallup poll, 70 percent of these women now regret that they are childless.

As it happens, a friend of mine who is a member of this same group recently attended her 25th reunion at one of the "seven sister" colleges. She told me she went with misgivings, since she had dropped out of the work force to raise four children. Though she is exceptionally clever, and her volunteer work exceeds in creativity what most of us do professionally, she was afraid she would feel outperformed by her old schoolmates, the majority of whom had become successful professionals. But instead of flaunting their achievements, many of these classmates resentfully took the occasion of their reunion to rail at the school's administration and faculty for not having encouraged them to aim for husbands and families while they still could. "Why weren't we *told*?" My friend was stirred by their misery, but struck by the futility of their complaint. One can sooner recapture the lost snows of yesteryear than the chance to bear and raise children.

As I said in that quote that caught your fancy, whether seen from the angle of career or motherhood, highly educated women face problems attributable to the very freedoms that gave them their options. Greater choices are *bound* to create greater unease, and sharper regrets over roads not taken. What feminism provides is a framework of grievance for the unease, and a politics to give it expression.

Here is the columnist Margaret Carlson, lambasting poor Lawrence Summers for his failure to understand "how much free-floating anxiety women feel over the hundred slights we suffer in the workplace and the anger we generally hide about the males who benefit from, and sometimes inflict, those slights":

> We've gotten some of what feminism asked for—flextime, maternity leave, equal opportunity in university admissions, almost equal pay at almost equal jobs (at the entry level, at least)—but we still face this indignity: If we start out with this much opportunity, when we don't do as well as men later, it has to be our fault. Surveys show that young married men are putting in an hour longer a day on the domestic front than they used to, but until men jump with both feet onto the daddy track the way women jump onto the mommy track, we can't and won't compete with them evenly for the very top jobs. What's more, we are supposed to shut up about it—feminism is so yesterday, and whining is so whiny.

And so on and so forth. What do you say to such self-parody? Here is a woman, enjoying unprecedented bounty, who still demands the one thing she is denied—the excuse to blame someone else for her dissatisfactions. Deplorably, Summers handed it to her.

YOU ASKED me whether, out of my own experience, I could offer some guidance on how to balance family and career. I can say one thing unequivocally: I and friends my age have no patience for this whiny whining. Evidently, so "socialized" were we by what Betty Friedan called the feminine mystique that we stupidly married in our early twenties and proceeded to have children without ever thinking that we could go about life in any other way. Or not so stupidly. Over the ensuing decades, some of us have had careers, some have worked part-time, some have started businesses. But I think I can speak for all in stating that our children loom so much larger than anything else in our lives, we could not possibly set them against any other conceivable competing good. Nor do I think Gallup will ever find 70 percent of women regretting that they *did* have children.

Egalitarian feminism's legacy to women like Margaret Carlson is a perpetual discontent. The more they are granted, the more they think they are missing. The more power they attain, the less powerful they feel. The more they achieve, the less they are gratified. The more they are blessed, the more loudly they curse their fate. So I watch with dismay today's brand of socialization, the one pushed by females fostering the cult of grievance and males turned into pretzels by free-floating guilt.

Urging women into difficult careers is all well and good; extending them equal opportunity is a matter of law; but the society that does not counsel early marriage and children is far crueler to women than the "sexist" one it replaced. Whatever social status accrues to Nobel Prize-winning scientists, the society of women will always honor those who marry happily and procreate.

You don't need my confirmation of this—just ask the writers of *Sex and the City*, who wound up their six-year series about the most self-indulgent women who ever lived with four happy heterosexual unions, one of them engaged in a Herculean struggle to produce a child. I can only hope that if

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you and your friends make your choices knowing you will have to bear their consequences, you may be able both to retain your self-respect and begin to restore the dignity of our sex.

I can't close this overlong letter without commenting on the last part of our conversation—when, to my surprise, you dropped your head in your hands and said, "The Democratic party is so hopeless. None of my friends is going into politics. We've all given up."

What was that all about? How did we get from a discussion of the Summers affair to the misfortunes of the Democrats? I think I've fathomed your distaste for the local atmosphere of intimidation, but how does that translate into despondency over the wide-open arena of American politics?

Not that connections are lacking between events on campus and political life outside. Indeed, were it not for the way the Summers affair fits into the Left-Right divide in America, the media would never have taken it up with such relish. "On campus, Summers has lost big," exulted Katha Pollitt in the *Nation*. "He has had to apologize, appoint a committee, and endure many a hairy eyeball from the faculty, and complaints from furious alumnae like me." Given how little the Left has had to crow about recently, it isn't hard to see why this incident should have given wings to a woman like Pollitt.

Somewhat more moderately, the *New York Times* did its best to amplify Summers's offenses by shifting the focus from the substance of his ideas to the "bigger concern" of his "management style," thus cheerfully passing a microphone to everyone keen on attacking him on any grounds whatsoever. And through all this, as Pollitt rightly gloated, the president kept apologizing. By the end of February, he had even acquired a style coach, who (I couldn't invent this) said: "It's a good thing when a male demonstrates vulnerability."

Were you truly a creature of the Left, Ellen, you would have been in your element to see so much blood in the local water. If what was at stake at Harvard, as one pundit claimed, was its liberal identity, by the time you and I talked at the end of February that identity had been reconfirmed; in Cambridge, at least, it seemed as if the left wing of the Democratic party had indeed utterly reversed Bush's victory at the polls. But from everything you were saying, it's clear you had no patience for this, and that the more the campus Left had managed to browbeat the president, the more you and your friends were intent on distancing yourselves from it.

No, the Harvard episode lit up national politics the way a flare lets us see the whole terrain, and you did not like what you beheld. Perhaps, then, your despair over the Democrats was a function of your recognition of how badly they have betrayed the tenets of your own kind of liberalism—the kind encapsulated in that passage you brought me from John Stuart Mill about the blessings of "liberty of thought and feeling, absolute freedom of opinion and sentiment on all subjects, practical or speculative, scientific, moral, or theological."

I suppose I can't blame you for being momentarily discouraged. But that doesn't absolve you from shouldering your political responsibilities just as you appear ready to shoulder your private ones. The Democratic party is not some inert beast to be circumvented; it can be changed from within or challenged from without. Stage your debate, by all means, take up the argument where the president left off. But give up? Not on your life. Neither a campus nor a polity is imposed on us from above; they are ours to shape and reform and strengthen—and, when necessary, to reinvent.

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Bush, Sharon, My Daughter, and Me

Norman Podhoretz

Jerusalem: Monday, January 31, 2005

"WHO ARE you?" my daughter Ruthie Blum demands as she greets me in the lobby of the King David hotel, "and what have you done with my father?" I laugh appreciatively at this newest twist on her antic idea that I have been invaded by aliens—an idea that first began taking shape about fourteen months ago, during my last visit to Israel, where she has been living for about 27 years now. And thereby hangs a long and complicated tale.

In late 2003, seizing as usual on a chance to see her and my four Israeli grandchildren, I had accepted an invitation to the conference on security held every year under the auspices of the Herzliya Institute. Though this was only the fourth such annual conference, it had by then developed into a major Israeli institution. And because everyone who was anyone felt obligated to attend, it had also increasingly become the place in which the nation's political leaders preferred to issue their most important public pronouncements. Hence it was at this fourth annual Herzliya conference in December 2003 that Prime Minister Ariel Sharon confirmed the rumors about his intention to put a "disengagement plan" into effect.

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The plan had three components. The first was to accelerate construction of the security fence that had recently begun going up between "Israel proper" and the territories it had captured from Jordan on the West Bank in the Six-Day war of 1967. Already some 800 Israelis had been murdered by Palestinian suicide bombers who had infiltrated into the country from the West Bank, and the main (indeed, Sharon insisted, the only) purpose of the fence was to make it harder for these monstrous human missiles to do their grisly work.

The second component of the plan was to dismantle a number of Jewish settlements in Gaza and the West Bank. "I know," Sharon said, "you would like to hear names, but we should leave something for later." All he would divulge for the moment was that the settlements to be "relocated" would be "those that will not be included in the territory of the state of Israel in any future agreement." At the same time, however, he promised that Israel would "strengthen its control over those same areas in the land of Israel that will constitute an inseparable part of the state of Israel in any future agreement."

These formulations represented a reaffirmation of Sharon's acceptance of the "road map" implementing—or purporting to implement—George W. Bush's vision of (as Sharon now summarized it) "a democratic Palestinian state with territorial contiguity in Judea and Samaria and economic viability, which would conduct normal relations with Israel."

By now, Sharon's acquiescence in the establish-

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ment of a Palestinian state raised not a single eyebrow. This was in stark contrast to the response when he had first come out in favor of the "two-state solution." Then, there had been amazement all around. After all, Sharon had always been considered the most hard-line of Israeli hawks, and among the most determined opponents of Palestinian statehood. As a former general, he had opposed it on grounds of security—that is, because he believed that it would become a haven for terrorists and a launching pad for new military assaults on the Jewish state. But in addition to these considerations, he had also opposed it because, in his view, Israel had a solid claim on these territories.

Though not a religiously observant Jew, let alone an ultra-Orthodox one, Sharon often said (I heard him say it more than once with my own ears) that he was a Jew first and an Israeli second. It was, then, as a Jew that he always referred to the territories as Judea and Samaria, never as "the West Bank" and certainly never as "occupied." For how could the very heartland of the biblical land of Israel be considered foreign to the present-day children of Israel? And it was both as a Jew and as a military man that, through the various ministerial offices he held in past governments, Sharon had done so much to increase the number and size of the Jewish settlements in those territories that he became known as the "father of the settler movement."[1] As he saw it, not only did Jews have an absolute right to live in Judea and Samaria, but by being placed along certain strategically located routes, they would form a protective barrier against invading armies.

It was hard to say precisely when Sharon's conversion to the two-state solution occurred. But so far had he traveled from his old position that, shortly before the December 2003 Herzliya conference, he had even used the word "occupation" in speaking of the territories. There was, then, nothing new in Sharon's restatement at Herzliya of his commitment to the two-state solution.

There was, however, something very new indeed in the path he now laid out for getting there. The Palestinians, he said, had thus far failed to take the first step to which they had pledged themselves under the road map: namely, to "uproot the terrorist groups" and to "call a halt to incitement and violence." On the contrary: "the terrorist organizations joined with Yasir Arafat and sabotaged the process with a series of the most brutal terror attacks we have ever known."

This might well have been seized upon as a good and sufficient reason for Israel to renege on its own difficult obligations under the road map, which included withdrawal from a still unspecified swath of the "occupied" territories. And yet Sharon (who as a general had been famous for bold tactical surprises) went in precisely the opposite direction. Israel, he announced—and here was the third component of his disengagement plan—would not only stick by its commitments, but would do so even if the Palestinians were to persist in disregarding theirs. While he would still prefer "direct negotiations" with the Palestinian Authority (PA), if it continued "dragging its feet," Israel would within a few months act unilaterally on the new disengagement plan.

Some days earlier, upon arriving at the 2003 Herzliya conference, I had been uncertain about the value of the security fence. People whose opinion I trusted doubted that it could stop, or even significantly reduce, terrorist attacks; others were confident that it would. There was also the question of whether its real purpose, despite Sharon's strong denial, was to draw the de-facto border between Israel and the future Palestinian state, and if so, whether the proposed route conceded too much or too little. About these issues, too, I was uncertain.

And then there was the problem I had with the road map. George W. Bush was the first American President to come out openly in favor of a Palestinian state. But after being stuck for a while in old habits of thought, he clearly came to the conclusion that it made no sense to add still another state to those harboring and sponsoring terrorism, precisely at a time when he was fighting to rid the world of such regimes. This led to the historic statement of June 24, 2002, in which Bush declared that the United States would not support the establishment of a Palestinian state unless and until new leaders emerged who would begin building "entirely new political and economic institutions, based on democracy, market economics, and action against terrorism."

These conditions, like the Bush Doctrine out of which they logically flowed and of which they formed a part, constituted a rebuke to and a repudiation of the approach long favored by the foreign ministries and the foreign-policy establishments of virtually every country in the world, including the United States itself. At worst, the traditional approach had always been based on the demonstrably false premise that Israel was the main obstacle to a peaceful resolution of the war—both hot and cold—that had been waged against it by the Arab

[1] Actually, it was not by Sharon but rather by a succession of Labor governments after 1967 that Jews were first encouraged to settle in the territories.

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world from the moment the Jewish state was born in 1948; at best, the two parties were held (in the language of moral equivalence so dear to this mentality) to be equally responsible for "the cycle of violence." But on June 24, 2002, Bush effected a major change of emphasis.

To be sure, he did "challenge Israel to . . . support the emergence of a viable, credible Palestinian state" by freezing "settlement activity in the occupied territories," by "permitting innocent Palestinians to resume work and normal life," and by pulling its military forces out of areas heavily populated by Palestinians. But these demands were themselves made contingent upon Palestinian action against terrorism, and in any case they played a decidedly subordinate role to the imperative of Palestinian reforms "based on democracy, market economics, and action against terrorism." By beginning with that imperative, and by devoting most of his speech to spelling it out, Bush for the first time placed the onus on the Palestinians rather than on the Israelis. Moreover, he refused to accept the inevitability, never mind the desirability, of a Palestinian state run by the arch terrorist and kleptocrat Arafat—or any other leader cast in the same mold.

Nor was that all. Instead of buying into the idea that the conflict in question was a struggle between Israel and the Palestinians alone—with Israel cast as Goliath and the Palestinians as David—Bush declared that the Palestinian people had for decades been "pawns" in a much wider war involving the whole of the Middle East and aimed at the destruction of the Jewish state. He therefore called on all the other states in the region to halt "the flow of money, equipment, and recruits to terrorist groups seeking the destruction of Israel—including Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hizballah." Specifically, "the shipment of Iranian supplies to these groups" must be blocked, and "Syria must choose the right side in the war on terror by closing terrorist camps and expelling terrorist organizations."

ALL THIS had been sweet music to my ears. But a jarringly cacophonous note was sounded when the State Department took over the job of producing a blueprint that was supposed to put Bush's policy into practice; and to make matters worse, State then proceeded to join with the European Union, the United Nations, and Russia in what came to be designated in diplospeak as the Quartet. Had there, I wondered, ever been a better case of the fox being invited into the henhouse?

In due course the fox emerged from the henhouse with the road map—another diplospeak coinage—clenched between its teeth. According to a careful analysis of this document by David Makovsky and Robert Satloff, it represented not the fulfillment but "the antithesis of Bush's June 24 vision for peacemaking in terms of substance, sequence, and procedure."[2] This may have been going a bit too far; yet, leaving aside the technical details to which Makovsky and Satloff pointed, the very fact that the Quartet had no compunction about forging ahead even while Arafat remained in power certainly did conflict with Bush's vision.

Why, then, did Bush endorse the road map? The most plausible answer involved the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who had been with him in his decision to invade Saddam Hussein's Iraq and who was still with him in the difficult effort to plant the seeds of democracy there now that Saddam was gone. Since Blair believed that nothing was more important than resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Bush had promised to repay his support on Iraq by devoting more attention to that conflict. Even so, was it really necessary for Bush to play along with the fiction that the new leadership he had called for had materialized in the person of a prime minister appointed and controlled by Arafat?

Here, I thought, the answer lay in what I had come to see as Bush's characteristic *modus operandi*. Thus, just as he had challenged the UN to enforce its own resolutions on Iraq; just as, far from "rushing into war," as his opponents charged, he had waited many months before taking action without the blessing of the Security Council; and just as he would later do in backing the negotiations aimed at keeping Iran from developing and North Korea from deploying nuclear weapons—so in this instance he was giving his critics every chance to show that they could attain the goals they claimed to share with him by means other than the use of force, or at least without rocking every boat in sight.

It was because I had come to place so much faith in Bush that I was able to overcome my misgivings about the road map. And it was partly because Sharon was also putting his money on Bush that I was ready to bet on Sharon. Unlike most Israelis, Sharon seemed to understand that the Bush Doctrine was already changing the entire context in which the Arab/Muslim war against the Jewish state had always been waged, and that in this new context, there were things Israel could do that it would have been too risky to do before.

As Sharon spoke that night at the Herzliya con-

[2] See also, in COMMENTARY, Daniel Pipes, "Does Israel Need a Plan?" (February 2003) and Abraham D. Sofaer, "The U.S. and Israel: The Road Ahead" (May 2003).

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ference, it was not yet clear that the disengagement plan would entail a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip. But so far as my daughter was concerned, the dismantling of any settlements whatsoever meant giving in to the terrorists, and it therefore clashed rather than dovetailed with the Bush Doctrine. There were those who objected to the disengagement plan mainly because of its unilateralism. But not Ruthie. Along with some of her political friends and allies on the Right, especially those who (unlike her) were religious, not even reciprocal concessions could justify throwing Jews out of the homes they had been encouraged to build by successive Israeli governments—and most of all by Sharon himself.

Ruthie took it for granted that I would be on her side, and so, I soon gathered, did other opponents of the disengagement plan whom I ran into during the breaks between sessions at the Herzliya conference. These were people who remembered me for my early and relentless criticism of the Oslo agreement. They were right: even before it was formally announced, I had laced into this rumored agreement in a lecture in Jerusalem, attacking its assumption that the Palestinians had given up their dream of wiping Israel off the map, and predicting that it would lead not to peace but to war. For the next seven years I would persist in this vein in my own writings, while also, as editor of Commentary, opening the magazine's pages to the handful of intellectuals who had the stomach to endure being excoriated as enemies of peace. Then, when war finally came in the form of the second *intifada* launched by Arafat in September 2000 in response to an Israeli offer of statehood on 95 percent of the occupied territories, even many on the Israeli Left who had worshiped at the shrine of Oslo finally acknowledged that its viciously reviled critics had been right all along.

Having always been proud of me for playing this role, Ruthie was now amazed to discover that on the whole I supported Sharon's disengagement plan—more amazed even than she had been by Sharon himself for announcing it. No doubt explanations could be found for Sharon's turnabout, but there was simply no accounting for mine. Desperately searching for something, anything, that would explain it away, she hit upon a happy inspiration. Like the "pod people" in the movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, I had been taken over by aliens who were using me to mouth opinions that her father—the real "pod(horetz)"—could not conceivably hold.

The joke would prove to be a godsend, making it possible to avoid nasty arguments as, in the months ahead, the gap between us would widen with further adumbrations of Sharon's disengagement plan. Now here we are at the end of January 2005, and if at Herzliya Sharon had refused to specify which settlements he meant to uproot, by this point he is proposing to withdraw every last Israeli—some 8,000 in all—from the Gaza Strip, and to dismantle at least four settlements in Samaria.

By this point, too, Arafat has died and Mahmoud Abbas has been elected to succeed him as president of the Palestinian Authority. This is the same man who two years earlier served a brief and hapless term as prime minister under Arafat. Hastily embraced then by Sharon and Bush as the kind of new leader demanded by the President's June 24, 2002 statement, he turned out to be the instrument of yet another of Arafat's con games. Now Sharon is accepting him once more as a "partner for peace," and there is even a photograph of the two of them shaking hands in a gesture that inevitably conjures up the image of Rabin and Arafat going through the same motion on the White House lawn the day the Oslo agreement was signed. No wonder Sharon seems to his opponents to be entering into Oslo II—though they also seem unable to decide whether this is better or worse than his unilateral "surrender to terrorism."

As for the fence, it has proved a far greater success in cutting down on terrorist attacks than even its most enthusiastic proponents had expected. On the other hand, its proposed route has kept changing and its completion has repeatedly been delayed by rulings of a supreme court that makes even the most liberal members of our own Supreme Court look like strict constructionists and models of judicial restraint.

This is why Ruthie and other Israelis of her persuasion fear that the fence will wind up sitting on the insecure borders that enclosed Israel before 1967; that all of Judea and Samaria—and even East Jerusalem—will be handed over to the Palestinians; and that, because the whole world (including many Israelis) takes as axiomatic the Arab position that a Palestinian state must be *judenrein*, the roughly 240,000 Israelis currently living in Judea and Samaria, like the settlers in Gaza before them, will in their turn face the prospect of being dragged out of their homes by the Israeli army and packed off to "Israel proper." If, she now says to me—her eyes ablaze with indignation—any such thing were to be done to Palestinians, or to anyone else, it would be called "transfer" or "ethnic cleansing" and con-

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demned as a crime against humanity. But with Jews as the victims, it is being transmuted by a malignant political alchemy into nothing less than an act of justice.

Ruthie is absolutely certain that her father would have been the first to understand and protest against all this. But the aliens have invaded him, and the aliens have other ideas.

Tuesday, February 1

ON THIS occasion, I have come to Israel as part of a small group associated with the Hudson Institute. We are here to receive a series of "briefings," mostly from the political Right, on the current state of affairs in the country, the first of which is being given today by A.[3]

Knowing that A. is a great admirer of Sharon, I am not surprised when he launches into a strong defense of the disengagement plan. But there are two unexpected wrinkles in his presentation.

One is his description of the pullout from Gaza as a "shortening" of Israel's defensive lines—not in the military but in the political sense. This formulation is new to me, though on reflection I realize that it does not differ all that much from how the new Palestinian leaders interpret the disengagement plan. Their take on it is that Sharon is withdrawing from Gaza only to get American permission for a "land grab" in the West Bank, and they cite the projected route of the fence as proof that Sharon intends to maintain control over anywhere from a third to a half of the occupied territories.

Be that as it may, to judge by everything I have been reading and hearing in recent months, A.'s description of the disengagement plan is not the usual argument Israelis make for it. As that argument goes, the only way Israel can remain democratic is to stop ruling over the Palestinians; and (because the Palestinians have a higher birthrate than the Israelis) the only way it can remain Jewish is to separate itself from them.

This line of thought originated on and was once largely confined to the Left. But no longer. The second *intifada*, and especially the horrific new weapon of suicide bombing that it introduced into the terrorist armory of the Palestinians, drove most Israelis to the despairing conclusion that there was simply no living with these people. As one participant at the 2003 Herzliya conference said to me in a private conversation: "Why should we keep trying to negotiate peace with people who want only to murder as many of us as they can? Instead of going on with this charade, the best thing we can do is cut ourselves off from them with the fence, and then let them stew in their own juices."

He was putting the case more bluntly than most Israelis would have been comfortable with, but it seemed clear that this sentiment was very widely shared and that, more than any other factor, it lay behind the overwhelming degree of support then being expressed for Sharon's disengagement plan.

Today, however, it is equally clear that Sharon has much less support than he did fourteen months ago. Since then—with the death of Arafat, the election of Abbas as his replacement, and Sharon's decision to accept him as a "partner for peace"—the unilateralist component of the disengagement plan has been dropped and the "charade" of negotiations has been resumed. In tandem with these developments, second thoughts about the price and the risks of his plan have come into play. By now, opposition to Sharon from within his own ranks has hardened to the point where former supporters and admirers are certain that the Palestinians have him exactly wrong, and that, far from aiming for a "land grab" in Judea and Samaria, he intends to pull all the way back to the '67 borders.

Nevertheless, Sharon, who (to my great surprise) has turned out to be as brilliant a politician as he was a general, has managed by adroit tactical maneuvers to fend off the opposition bred by these second thoughts.

Having exhausted all the parliamentary means at their disposal, the opposition has now invested all its hopes in forcing a referendum on the pullout from Gaza—and it is in connection with this issue that I encounter the second unexpected wrinkle in A.'s briefing. Proponent of the disengagement plan though he is, A. thinks Sharon is wrong to resist holding a referendum. For one thing, he believes that Sharon would win it, and that this would silence the opposition and unite the nation behind him. And if he were to lose? A.'s answer is to shrug.

Whatever the merits of the debate over a referendum, I gather that the chances of holding one are very slim. At this stage, moreover, it is impossible to tell whether the pullout from Gaza will presage a large-scale evacuation of Judea and Samaria, or

[3] Not having taken notes, I feared that I might misquote the speakers who briefed us. I also wanted to avoid saddling them with the responsibility for my own paraphrastic summaries of what they said. For these reasons I have withheld their names and disguised their identities in other ways as well. In addition to scrambling the dates on which we met with them, I have sometimes amalgamated points made by several different speakers and assigned them to a single one, and in other cases I have taken points made by a single speaker and distributed them among several. I have done my best, however, to present an accurate account of the points themselves and of the general arguments they serve.

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whether it will strengthen Israel's case for maintaining its hold over large chunks of those territories.

Wednesday, February 2

VISITING A special facility set up by the police to monitor the Old City of Jerusalem and the area around the Temple Mount, I am reminded that the army is not the only instrument Israel has used in fighting the second *intifada*. With the help of cleverly located cameras, the police have been able to spot and catch a number of suicide bombers before they could blow themselves up. But I am also reminded of the amazing job the army has done under Sharon's direction.

Everyone said that terrorism could not be countered by military means, and that it could only be stopped by a political solution. But as is so often the case in such matters, everyone was wrong. Until June 24, 2002, Bush had not yet fully freed himself from the "cycle of violence" paradigm under which Israel's retaliatory strikes against terrorist attacks, and even such strictly defensive measures as checkpoints, were, and still are, equated with and even blamed for the attacks themselves.[4] But once he realized that this way of looking at things clashed with his general attitude toward terrorism, Bush gave Sharon a tacit green light. No longer having to worry about jeopardizing his relations with the United States, Sharon was finally able to go all-out with the strategy he had hit upon: a combination of defense (the fence, which made it harder for suicide bombers to get through) and offense (targeted assassinations that decapitated the terrorist leadership, plus incursions into and sweeps of their strongholds).

So well did this strategy work that suicide bombing has by now been largely eliminated from the terrorist arsenal of the Palestinians. And even though there continues to be sporadic shelling of several towns and villages within range of the homemade Kassam rockets favored by Hamas, it does little damage. All in all, then, it can be said that the second *intifada* has been defeated.

If I had entertained any doubts about this, they would have been dispelled by the stroll we take with B. through the Old City after leaving the police station. Only a short while ago, he tells us, it would have been foolhardy for any Jew to walk these ancient streets, but today, as we can see for ourselves, there is not so much as a hint of menace in the air: no threatening posters, no hate-filled looks, nothing but beckoning smiles from the Arab shopkeepers in the densely crowded marketplace. They were, B. says, hit very hard by the loss of business they suffered as a result of the *intifada*, and they understandably long to see Israeli bargain-hunters and tourists from abroad streaming into the Old City once again.

Thursday, February 3

C., ANOTHER expert on the Palestinians who briefs us today, is less sympathetic toward them than B. seemed to be. Make no mistake, he warns us: Abbas and the others represent Arafatism without Arafat. The stubble may have been replaced by a clean shave and the kaffiyeh by a coat and tie, but Abbas himself is cut from the same cloth as the man he has replaced.

True, Abbas believes that terrorism has become counterproductive, and that the second *intifada* has ended in failure. But he does not oppose terrorism in principle, and he will not use force to disarm Hamas, Islamic Jihad, or even the Al Aqsa Brigades associated with Fatah, the party of which (like Arafat before him) he himself is the head. In other words, he will not comply with the demand made both by Israel and the United States that he "dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism."

This means that the latest cease-fire—whose terms include a pledge by Israel to refrain from any further targeted assassinations—will only give the terrorist groups a much-need breathing space. And as they exploit this welcome chance to rearm and regroup in preparation for their next systematic campaign, they can also resort to sporadic attacks whenever they feel that the "peace process" is going too well.[5]

Nor, C. goes remorselessly on, does Abbas's own willingness to observe a cease-fire and enter into negotiations with the Israelis signify that he is genuinely interested in a peaceful resolution of the conflict. If nothing else, his continued insistence on the "right of return" flatly contradicts his professed commitment to the two-state solution. For if such a right were ever granted to the Palestinians, the demographic threat to the Jewish character of Israel would be impossible to fend off, and the end result would be not two states living side by side but a single state with a Palestinian majority.

[4] I have always thought that the best comment on the absurdity of this paradigm came from the late Daniel Patrick Moynihan. When, during his brief stint as our ambassador to the UN in the mid-1970's, Moynihan was criticized for refusing to remain diplomatically silent in the face of anti-American tirades, he responded by quoting an old French maxim: "How wicked is this animal. When he is attacked he defends himself."

[5] This prediction was borne out by the suicide bombing in Tel Aviv on February 25—the first in more than three months.

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Asked how the Palestinians see the disengagement plan, C. offers a smile that is simultaneously cynical and wan. Yes, he replies, Abbas and his colleagues do recognize that the second *intifada* failed in its objective—which was to disrupt Israeli society, demoralize its people, and cripple its economy. Nor do they credit the *intifada* with driving Sharon out of Gaza. But ordinary Palestinians are a different story. They have no doubt that Sharon's decision to get out of Gaza—exactly like the decision of his predecessor Ehud Barak to abandon the security zone Israel had established in Lebanon—is another proof that the shelling and bombing of Israeli civilians is the way to go.

But what about the Bush Doctrine? This time, C.'s smile is more cynical than wan. It is all very well, he says, to deliver pretty lectures to the Palestinians about democracy. But Bush is fooling himself if he thinks that the Palestinian people are any less opposed to the existence of Israel than their leaders are. C. does not deny that ordinary Palestinians have been repressed and oppressed by the thuggery and corruption of those leaders. And yet, after years of unremitting indoctrination by the textbooks they study in school, the newspapers they read, the television programs they watch, and the sermons they hear in the mosques, the Palestinians are so imbued with hatred of Israel, and of Jews everywhere, that most of them can hardly imagine living in peace with so great an evil.

Is there, then, no hope at all? Here, to my surprise, C. shies away from the logical conclusion to which his entire analysis points. Suddenly turning into an economic determinist, he allows that internal reform along the lines of Bush's June 24 statement might be possible, but only if it is made a precondition of any further financial aid to the Palestinian Authority. Yet Bush now proposes to give the new crowd an immediate down payment of $350 million. In the absence of a stick, C. is sure that a goodly chunk of this carrot will wind up in the same Swiss banks as all the other millions before them. As for the rest, instead of being used to improve the lot of the Palestinian people, it will in all probability be spent on illegal arms.

I AGREE WITH just about every word C. has uttered. I still see no evidence that "the Abu's"—as Ruthie sardonically mimics the post-Arafat leaders' swaggering preference for their *noms de guerre* as terrorists—have experienced a change of heart. Abbas (Abu Mazen) and his prime minister Ahmed Qureia (Abu Ala) were Arafat's loyal henchmen from the start. As such, they either acquiesced or played an active role in the long series of terrorist atrocities perpetrated by the PLO.

And why not? Far from having been punished for following this path, the PLO under Arafat achieved recognition by the "international community" as the "sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," and was ultimately embraced even by Israel and the United States, both of whom had pledged never to deal with it. Even then, and even after Arafat was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, he went on sponsoring terrorist attacks without losing any sympathy or support—not from the world at large; not from the United States (under the administration of Bill Clinton, he was invited to the White House more often than any other foreign leader); and not from Israel (under the Labor governments of Yitzhak Rabin, Shimon Peres, and Ehud Barak, and, if reluctantly, under the Likud government of Benjamin Netanyahu as well, he continued being treated as a "partner for peace").

Things began to change only in 2001, when Sharon, deciding that enough was enough, refused to have anything further to do with Arafat, and finally penned him up in his compound in Ramallah. At first Bush had permitted himself to be influenced by the State Department's kneejerk disapproval of this move. But then the Israelis intercepted the Karine A, a ship trying—in violation of a cease-fire which had been brokered by an American envoy—to smuggle arms into the hands of the Palestinians. Questioned over the phone by Bush, Arafat claimed that he knew nothing about any such ship, and accused Israel of trumping up the incident as an excuse to break the cease-fire.

This was exactly the kind of con game Arafat had been playing with perfect success ever since assuming his new persona as a pursuer of peace. But like practically everyone else in the world, Arafat had "misunderestimated" George W. Bush. Not only did Bush refuse the sucker bait, but—aware of the overwhelming evidence proving that the Karine A had been a PA operation from start to finish, and disgusted by being told so blatant a lie in a one-on-one conversation—he now joined Sharon in refusing to have anything to do with Arafat.

It was the isolation of Arafat, combined with the launching of Sharon's new strategy and the green light Bush gave to it, that turned the tide against the second *intifada*. And as things grew worse for the Palestinians, Abbas and a number of other Arafat loyalists correlatively grew more and more convinced that the deliberate murder of Israeli civilians was losing its usefulness as a tactic and becoming

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both militarily and politically counterproductive.

I agree, then, with C. in doubting that there has been a real change of heart on the issue of terrorism among Arafat's successors. As for their embrace of the two-state solution, C.'s insistence that it is tactical rather than principled fits very well with my own take on the situation. Thus, I have long been convinced that the war against the Jewish state can only be ended by those who have been waging it since 1948, and that the Arab/Muslim world will make peace with Israel only after it makes peace with *itself* over the existence of a sovereign Jewish state in its midst, wherever its boundaries might be drawn. Until, that is, the day comes when the peoples of the greater Middle East, and their Muslim brethren elsewhere, can find it in their hearts to acknowledge the right of the Jewish people to a state of their own in the land of their forefathers, any peace treaty will amount to nothing more than a temporary cease-fire in an ongoing campaign to wipe Israel off the map.

At the same time, on the assumption that in the affairs of men nothing is forever, I could not rule out the possibility that this wondrous day might actually come. Which brings me to George W. Bush, and to where I disagree with C.

I have no great quarrel with him when he questions the wisdom of sending more money to the Palestinian Authority before Abbas has earned it by cracking down on the terrorists and taking serious steps toward democratization. But surely the money is only a gesture, and is in any event a trivial matter as compared with what Bush has done to the context in which the Palestinians are now forced to operate. Under the Bush Doctrine, terrorist acts are no less evil when committed by Palestinians than when perpetrated by Al Qaeda; and the PA is just another one of the despotic regimes in the region that the United States has set about to replace with governments committed to the establishment and expansion of political and economic freedom.

Of course, the PA, unlike all the other regimes targeted by the Bush Doctrine, is not a full-fledged state. But there's the rub. If Abbas and his colleagues want a state of their own, the price they will have to pay is both a serious commitment to democratization and a break with Arafat's policy of professing to accept Israel while waging a terrorist war against it for which he brazenly disclaimed any responsibility. Arafat got away with this game until he tried it on George W. Bush; if his successors are foolish enough to reach into the same bag of tricks, they stand to lose a great deal more than a few hundred million American dollars. For unless I completely misread him, George W. Bush will not be put off by the ritualistic condemnations of terrorism or the revolving-door arrests of the Arafat era; he will not be bamboozled by lies ("I never authorized this"); and he will not tolerate excuses ("I don't have the power to stop it").

The upshot is that the Palestinians are now as subject as all the other regimes in the broader Middle East to the great new force Bush has set into motion throughout the region. Moreover, the velocity this force has acquired since the elections in Iraq on January 31 strongly suggests that the Bush Doctrine will have proved itself so decisively by the time its author leaves office that it will be next to impossible for his successor to change course. Hence, if the Palestinians are hoping to wait Bush out, the odds are that they are hoping in vain.

All in all, the plain fact is that the Palestinians are in a *less* advantageous position than any of the other regimes in the region to resist the Bush Doctrine, if only because, if they lose American support, the statehood they seek will most surely elude them.

Do the Palestinians really want statehood if it means giving up the dream they have always dreamed of eliminating a Jewish state from the Middle East? Arafat showed that he wanted no part of statehood on such terms when he rejected the offer of it made to him by Barak and Clinton. In this, the most crucial respect of all, it remains to be seen just how new the new leaders of the Palestinian Authority truly are.

Friday, February 4-Wednesday, February 9

ALL THE many experts we meet for the rest of our stay fully share in C.'s skepticism about the Palestinians. Even those who tend to credit the sincerity of Abbas's stated opposition to terrorism, and who take his professions of conversion to a two-state solution more or less at face value, also doubt that he possesses either the personal or the political strength to act upon them. But this is a positively sunny analysis as compared with what we keep hearing about Sharon. One briefer after another pours scorn on every feature of the admiring picture that had been drawn for us by A. when we first arrived.

The exceptions are few, and even they are less positive than mixed. For example, D., who acknowledges that Sharon has his virtues, and who supports the disengagement plan as the least bad of the available alternatives, also complains that Sharon is no respecter of democratic norms. In similar fashion, E., while grudgingly admitting that Sharon framed the right strategy for defeating the

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second *intifada*, goes on to attack him for failing to finish the job by dismantling the entire infrastructure of violence sheltered or operated by the PA.

From there it is all downhill into the swamps of motive-mongering. According to F., the only reason Sharon came up with his disengagement plan was to distract attention from the attorney general's investigations into various accusations of corruption against him and his sons. According to G., Sharon was courting favor with the Left so that he could betray his own supporters without losing power. According to H., Sharon the soldier may have been a hero, but Sharon the politician is only out to save his own skin, even if that means jeopardizing the safety of the country for which he once risked his life.

This kind of stuff puts me off, and I am relieved when I. comes along to present a respectable case against the disengagement plan. Sharon, I. maintains, has everything backward. By this he means that if there is to be a withdrawal from Gaza, it should follow upon, not precede, democratic reform. This is the position most famously associated with Natan Sharansky, whose own way of putting it is that the time for Jews to move out of areas heavily populated by Palestinians, if they should wish to do so, is when they are free to stay without having to fear for their lives.

My heart goes out to this idea, and I would like nothing better than to run with it. But the trouble is that, even in a best-case scenario for democratic reform within the PA, it will take a very long time before the lambs will be able to feel safe in lying down next to the lions of Gaza, Judea, and Samaria.

Why not wait, then? This is what I myself once thought was the best course for Israel to follow: that is, to stall until the arrival of that happy day when the Arab-Muslim world in general, and the Palestinians in particular, convincingly demonstrated that they had, however reluctantly, reconciled themselves to the existence of a sovereign Jewish state in their midst. And it was precisely because it was obvious no such day had arrived when the Oslo accords were signed that I felt sure the agreement would end in another violent assault against an Israel weakened by unilateral concessions.

TODAY, THE opponents of the disengagement plan who see it as Oslo II, with Sharon cast as Rabin in wolf's clothing and Abbas as Arafat in a suit, seize upon every sign that the requisite change of heart has still not taken place. Yet even though I am inclined to agree with them about the Palestinians, I think they are wrong about Sharon.

Like Sharon in 2003, Rabin had been prompted to act in the early 1990's by a big change in world affairs. In his case, the change was the demise of the Soviet Union. As he saw it, this momentous event had completely altered the old "strategic equation" in the Middle East by depriving the "frontline" Arab states of the armorer they had previously depended upon for engaging Israel militarily. In consequence, there was almost no likelihood that they would start any more conventional wars, as they had done several times in the past. This meant in effect that the Palestinians were now on their own; and while they could, on their own, assuredly make life miserable for Israel through terrorism, they were too weak to pose an "existential threat" to the Jewish state. The only serious threat now came from the missiles of Iran and/or Iraq. To protect itself from that threat, Israel needed the help of the United States in building an effective system of antiballistic-missile defense.

Thus, for Rabin, the overriding strategic objective—merging military with political imperatives—was to ensure continued American support. How to do this? Well, the Americans were convinced that giving the Palestinians a state of their own was the answer to unrest and instability throughout the Middle East. It followed that if Israel were to drop its "intransigent" resistance to this solution, relations with Washington would be more or less permanently shored up. This would in one stroke eliminate any future possibility that Israel might be denied the advanced military technology on which its survival now rested and which it could only get from the Pentagon.

Whatever the other merits of this analysis, Rabin should have known, even if Washington did not know and did not wish to know, that the demise of the Soviet Union had not been accompanied by the end of Arab rejectionism in general or, in particular, by a new Palestinian willingness to accept a two-state solution. And Rabin should also have known, even if, again, Washington did not know and did not wish to know, that a Palestinian state ruled by Arafat was a formula for more and not less unrest and instability throughout the Middle East.

In short—as the outcome of Oslo would so vividly demonstrate—Rabin badly misjudged the significance for Israel of the big change that had taken place in the strategic environment of the early 1990's.

Obviously the count is not yet in on the significance for Israel of the big change wrought by 9/11 and the American response to it in the form of the Bush Doctrine, to both of which Sharon's disengagement plan is itself a response. But it is already safe to say that, as the second *intifada* killed off the

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Israeli illusions behind Oslo, 9/11 marked the demise of "stability" as the be-all and end-all of American policy in the broader Middle East. "For decades," Bush now declared, "free nations tolerated oppression in the Middle East for the sake of stability. In practice, this approach brought little stability and much oppression." And so the United States under Bush adopted exactly the opposite approach, and has ever since been working to destabilize the old despotisms on which, in the pre-9/11 era, Washington had long relied.

The corollary—to say once more what cannot be said too often—is that George W. Bush will not cooperate (as his predecessors were ready and even eager to do) in the creation of a Palestinian state run by the likes of an Arafat. From this it follows that Arafat's successors—to repeat another thing that cannot be said too often—are being confronted by the Bush Doctrine with the choice between a two-state solution and no state at all. Therefore, even if the Palestinians have not undergone the change of heart on which I myself once thought Israel should wait for as long as it took, the Bush Doctrine will force them to behave (behave, not just talk) as though they have done so: to crack down on terrorism, to set a course toward political and economic freedom, and to forget about the "right of return."[6]

Surely, then, it is too much to demand—as I., echoing Sharansky, does—the creation of an environment in which Jews can live at ease under Palestinian sovereignty. Surely, waiting indefinitely upon this happy eventuality would entail a failure to seize on the new possibilities created by the same Bush Doctrine of which Sharansky, who in this respect goes far beyond it, is otherwise a great booster (as is its author of him). Surely it is enough for now to demand of a Palestinian state-in-the-making that it convincingly demonstrate its intention to live on peaceful terms with the Jewish state beside it.

Other elements of a respectable case against the disengagement plan are presented by J., whose main theme is that, far from making Israel safer through a shortening (whether military or political) of its defensive lines, Sharon's policy will make it more vulnerable, and in at least two ways. First, since the Palestinians are entirely justified in interpreting Israel's withdrawal from Gaza as cutting and running in the face of terrorism, it will inevitably encourage more terrorist attacks. Second, with the redeployment of the army, the Israeli towns within reach of the Kassam rockets will now become even more naked unto their enemies than before.

Reasonable though these arguments may be, I am less moved by them than I am by I.'s Sharansky-like stand. As to the prediction that terrorism will increase after the withdrawal from Gaza, I have already come to the conclusion that if it turns out to be right, it will bring about the loss (or, at a minimum, the suspension) of American support for a Palestinian state. So, too, if neighboring Israeli towns continue to be shelled. If these things happen, the outcome J. most fears and opposes will be headed off by yet another instance of the notorious Palestinian habit of never failing to miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity.

J., however, also raises an objection to the fence that is harder for me to dismiss. Not that he questions its success as a security measure. How could he when, in areas where it has been completed, not a single suicide bomber has gotten through?[7] Nevertheless, if it is true that the fence, when finished, will mark the de-facto border between Israel and the nascent Palestinian state, the question arises of how many Jews now living in Judea and Samaria it will be able to encompass. Is J. right in darkly predicting that as few as 50,000 of them will wind up within the new borders of the Jewish state, and that the other 190,000 will be added to the 8,000 of their fellows already slated for eviction from Gaza?

Some months ago, perhaps trying to mollify alarmists like J., Dov Weisglass, Sharon's top adviser, told an interviewer that, in exchange for the withdrawal of 8,000 Jews from Gaza, 190,000 Jews in Judea and Samaria would be able to *stay* in their homes. This statement was then subjected to denials and disavowals. Still, the impression I receive from a long one-on-one meeting with K., a high official of the Sharon government, is that the denials and disavowals were only an attempt to stuff a prematurely sprung cat back into the bag. The de-facto border being drawn by the fence, this official assures me, will encompass the big settlement blocs whose combined population does indeed add up to about 190,000 people.[8]

[6] Bush made this last condition explicit in writing to Sharon on April 14, 2004: "It seems clear that an agreed, just, fair, and realistic framework for a solution to the Palestinian refugee issue . . . will need to be found through the establishment of a Palestinian state, and the settling of Palestinian refugees there, rather than in Israel."

[7] It appears that the one who got through into Tel Aviv a few weeks later was only able to make it because that part of the fence has not yet been completed.

[8] This is another forecast that was largely borne out in the weeks ahead. Thus, the new route approved by the Israeli cabinet on February 20 will encompass upward of 185,000 settlers while leaving some 55,000 on the Palestinian side. Furthermore, as K. also predicted, this will be accomplished without either a "land grab" or a return to the '67 borders, since the territory on the Israeli side of the fence will comprise only 8 percent of the West Bank.

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When I ask K. how he thinks this will go down with Washington, he pulls out a copy of Bush's letter to Sharon of April 14, 2004, and—adding his own heavy emphasis—quotes from the relevant passage:

> In light of new realities on the ground, *including already existing major Israeli population centers*, it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final-status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949 [i.e., the '67 borders].

Well, I think to myself, 190,000 is better than 50,000. But how on earth will Sharon pull it off without unleashing a mini civil war? Already there is much speculation about the violence that may erupt once the withdrawal starts in Gaza, where there are "only" 8,000 to be relocated. Already there are rabbis decreeing that it is forbidden for a Jew to force another Jew out of the land of Israel. And already people are wondering how many members of the IDF—about a third of whose officer corps is now religious to one degree or another—will pay heed to these rabbis and refuse to carry out what they might well consider illegal orders. And what about secular Israeli soldiers, especially those who sympathize with the settlers? (One such is my own grandson, who makes his mother look like a moderate, and who is now serving in the very unit of the IDF that will be sent to assist in the relocation.) What will happen if, God forbid, they are fired upon or otherwise assaulted and are required to use their guns in order to get the job done?

There is, I now learn from a briefing by L., a theory according to which Sharon is hoping for just such a horrendous outcome in Gaza so that he can persuade Washington that evacuating even as "few" as 50,000 settlers from the West Bank would be impossible. I very much doubt that Sharon has that much Machiavelli in him. I also doubt (wishfully?) that the settlers will go beyond passive resistance or force a bloody confrontation with the IDF. But at this stage, no one—certainly not an outsider like me—has any way of knowing for sure.

As an American, however, I think there is one thing I know better than any of the Israelis who have been briefing us all week, and it again concerns George W. Bush.

ANTI-SEMITIC conspiracy theorists imagine that a nefarious cabal of neoconservative advisers—all of whom are Jewish "Likudniks" and are also either paid or unpaid agents of the Israeli government—have seduced this fool of a President into a policy whose stated goal may be to fight terrorism and to spread democracy throughout the broader Middle East, but whose real purpose is to serve Sharon's expansionist designs. Yet in almost comical contrast, what worries most of the *Israeli* Likudniks by whom we have been briefed this week is that Bush, in his eagerness to resolve Israel's conflict with the Palestinians through the establishment of a Palestinian state, will allow them to get away with violating the conditions he himself has attached to American support for such a state. At its most nightmarish, the fear is that Abbas will appease Hamas, Bush will appease Abbas, Sharon will appease both Abbas and Bush, and the lives of tens of thousands of Israelis will be disrupted and even ruined to make room for a terrorist state standing next to an Israel pushed back to the indefensible borders of 1967.

To me, after almost four years of watching Bush in action, this seems wildly off the mark. Indeed, just as I would be flabbergasted if Bush were to break faith with his pledge to help sow the seeds of political and economic freedoms throughout the broader Middle East, so I would be astounded were he to renege on the preconditions he has attached to his support for a Palestinian state. And here a fascinating irony occurs to me concerning my original misgivings about the road map.

I still think that the road map embodied an attempt by the usual suspects to sabotage the June 24 speech, but I now think that the joke may be on them. Yes, the authors of the road map did manage to reintroduce the old framework of "moral equivalence" that Bush had rejected on June 24. Nevertheless, the pretense that they were implementing his "vision" coerced them into including under phase I the demand that the Palestinian leadership "undertake visible efforts on the ground to arrest, disrupt, and restrain individuals and groups conducting and planning violent attacks on Israelis anywhere." Beyond going after these individuals and groups, the Palestinian Authority was also required to mount "effective operations aimed at . . . dismantlement of terrorist capabilities and infrastructure."

Now, however, Abbas—who wants to negotiate with the terrorists of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and those connected with his own party—is asking to be relieved of the demand that he crack down on them immediately and hard. There can be little doubt that the authors of the road map would like to support him on this, but Sharon is in a position to rub their noses in their own words, and that is just what he is doing.

Something similar seems to be shaping up with respect to the borders of the future Palestinian state. Under the road map, as soon as it is agreed that both

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parties have met all their obligations under phase I, they enter phase II, which is supposed to culminate in "the creation of a Palestinian state with provisional borders." But Abbas would like to skip over this stage as well, and go directly into phase III, when the "permanent-status agreement" is to be forged on "borders, Jerusalem, refugees, settlements." Here again, the authors of the road map would like to accommodate him, and here too Sharon is in a good position to see them hoist by their own petard.

The upshot is that unless Abbas amazes everyone by turning out to be willing and able both to undertake a genuine struggle against Palestinian terrorism and to speed up the pace of democratic reform, the process will probably get stalled in phase II. This will—just as Bush clearly envisaged in his June 24 statement—give the Israelis a chance to find out whether the Palestinians have truly decided to call off their war against the Jewish state before the most intractable issues get shoved onto the table.

Perhaps because there is so much talk of Sharansky in the air, this ironic turn in the role played by the road map brings up memories of what happened to the Helsinki accords of 1975. At the time, those of us who opposed the policy of détente with the Soviet Union denounced this agreement because it ratified the Soviet domination of Eastern Europe in exchange for nothing more than a paper promise by Moscow to respect certain basic principles of human rights. Although we were right in thinking that the Soviets had no intention of living up to this promise, neither they nor we understood that it had put a very powerful weapon into the hands of dissidents like Sharanksy in their struggle against the Communist regime. Ultimately, Helsinki, instead of ensuring the permanence of the Soviet empire, contributed to its eventual demise.

The analogy is no more perfect than analogies usually are, but I suspect that the road map, which Sharon had good reason to resist endorsing, will wind up protecting him against the Quartet's unremitting campaign to let Abbas off the hook by diluting the demands that Bush made of the Palestinians on June 24, 2002, and which he keeps on reiterating in the same forceful terms whenever he returns to the subject.

IN THE end, then, it all comes back to Bush. So relentlessly have I harped on this that one exasperated briefer accuses me of harboring a veritably religious faith in him. The accusation stings because, if true, it would mean that I am again violating the vow I originally made to myself after the election of my old friend Daniel P. Moynihan to the United States Senate in 1976.

Like so many others who had worked to get him there, I had expected Moynihan to persist in the battle we had all been waging against the steadily leftward drift of the Democratic party. But when he broke our hearts by joining in that drift himself, I resolved that from then on I would abide by the words of the Psalmist: "Put not your trust in princes." I managed to keep that promise even in relation to Ronald Reagan, who in those days seemed to me overly cautious in walking the walk of his thrilling anti-Communist talk. But then another old friend, Benjamin Netanyahu, became prime minister of Israel, and out the window went the exhortation of the Psalmist, only to fly back in when Bibi disappointed my hope that he would slam the brakes on Oslo.[9]

Is it now flying out again in relation to George W. Bush? I cannot in all honesty dismiss the possibility. And yet neither can I dismiss the possibility that this is one prince who, on the basis of repeated demonstration, deserves to be trusted.

When I suggest as much to Ruthie as we part, she shoots back without missing a beat: "What is it with you aliens? Weren't you satisfied with corrupting my father politically? Did you also have to go and turn him into an idolator?" As I did when she greeted me on my arrival, I laugh in appreciation of still another new twist on her antic idea of what has happened to me (this one inspired by my book celebrating the prophets of the Hebrew Bible as generals in a great war against idolatry).

But this time—affected as I have been by a week of exposure to the anxieties pervading the Israeli air—the laugh comes out sounding more than a little uneasy. And fully aware as I now am of the heavy price many thousands of Jews will have to pay for the increased security and the peace that I still believe Bush and Sharon, working together, will bring, it is also a laugh that—in accord with an old Yiddish expression now springing into my mind—carries within it the unmistakable intimation of tears.

—March 7, 2005

[9] He has, however, greatly exceeded my expectations as finance minister.

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Surprise Attack: The Lessons of History

Richard A. Posner

SINCE THE terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, there has been an understandable preoccupation with how to reform the nation's intelligence system in order to prevent the recurrence of such an event. But the issue has been considered in a historical vacuum. The history of surprise attacks composes a pattern to which the 9/11 attacks conformed. Once this pattern is grasped, it becomes apparent that reforming the intelligence system has serious limitations as a means of defending against international terrorism. Overselling intelligence can cause us to slight other, potentially more effective avenues of defense, such as making our borders less porous.

Before 9/11, the biggest surprise attack against the United States had been the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor in December 1941. The question of why we were surprised is the subject of a large scholarly literature dominated by Roberta Wohlstetter's *Pearl Harbor: Warning and Decision*. Since this book's publication more than 40 years ago, additional documents have been declassified or have otherwise become available, and a stubborn revisionist school continues to argue that Roosevelt or Churchill or both knew the attack was coming but kept mum in order to lure America into the war. Nevertheless, Wohlstetter's study is generally and rightly considered authoritative.*

In 1941, as Wohlstetter explains, we had plenty of warning signs of an impending attack, in part because we had cracked the code ("MAGIC") that the Japanese government used to communicate with its embassies around the world, including its embassy in Washington. War with Japan was expected to break out at any time, and the direction of a Japanese offensive was thought to be southward toward the Philippines, Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). Because such an offensive would expose the Japanese flank to U.S. ships in the Pacific, a preemptive Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor was hardly out of the question. Pearl Harbor was also known to be within range of the Japanese fleet, which was rich in aircraft carriers.

Why, then, did we not take measures to protect Pearl Harbor from air attack? The answer is multifold. For one thing, as Wohlstetter explains, to have a reasonable chance of detecting a surprise attack would have required instituting dense air patrols, which would have stripped aircraft from other fronts that seemed in greater danger of at-

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* Other noteworthy works on surprise attacks include Richard K. Betts, *Surprise Attack: Lessons for Defense Planning* (1982), and Cynthia M. Grabo, *Anticipating Surprise: Analysis for Strategic Warning* (2002).

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tack, such as the Philippines—where in fact the Japanese attacked within hours of Pearl Harbor—and would have interfered with pilot training. When a satisfactory response to a threat is difficult to devise, the tendency is, ostrich-like, to deny the threat.

Similarly, because our fleet was already heavily engaged in combat with German submarines in the Atlantic (though we were not yet formally at war with Germany), it was difficult for policy planners to see how we could take on Japan at the same time. In Wohlstetter's words, "the assumption was . . . 'If we lose in the Atlantic, we lose everywhere.' This meant that the Far East simply had to stay quiet." Besides, although some signs pointed to Pearl Harbor as a target, more pointed to other possible objectives, including the Soviet Union and Thailand, as well as the British, Dutch, and U.S. possessions in the Far East. As Wohlstetter writes:

> We failed to anticipate Pearl Harbor not for want of the relevant materials, but because of a plethora of irrelevant ones. . . . The signals that the local commanders later argued were muffled and fraught with uncertainty are the ones they viewed before the event. The signals that seem to stand out and scream of the impending catastrophe are the ones learned about only after the event, when they appear stripped of other possible meanings.

Because these warning signals were not effectively pooled, moreover, no one had the full picture of the danger. One reason the signals weren't pooled was security. The best source, the decrypted MAGIC code, was highly sensitive: if the Japanese discovered that their code had been broken, they would change it. So access to MAGIC was limited to a handful of high officials—who had neither the time nor the background to make sense of what they were reading.

THERE WERE additional constraints on our ability to gain a true picture of the danger. Politically, our leaders had difficulty understanding *why* the Japanese would want to attack Pearl Harbor. It is true that we were squeezing Japan hard economically, in order to deter it from attacking the Soviet Union and to convince it to abandon its ambition to dominate Asia. But we ourselves were extremely unlikely to attack Japan first. Had the Japanese confined their aggression to nations they could actually defeat, the United States—given its strong isolationist streak and the Roosevelt administration's preoccupation with the greater menace of Germany—might well have hesitated to declare war on Japan. In brief, it was reasonable to think that Japan's optimal strategy, especially given its military weakness vis-à-vis the U.S., would be to *avoid* precipitating a war.

To understand why Japan might nevertheless decide to attack Pearl Harbor would have required us to understand a culture alien to our own, and specifically to understand how, even with the knowledge that they might be defeated, the Japanese would think it more honorable to fight than to abandon their announced policy of dominating Asia. We would also have needed to understand how Japan's rulers saw the likely American response to such an attack. In the event, just as we underestimated their devotion to national honor, they underestimated ours.

Within the intelligence community itself, a further obstacle to a correct estimate of Japanese intentions was departmental reluctance to challenge consensus views. People in general hesitate to admit to having been mistaken or to being surprised by new data; intelligence officers are no exception. A reputation for being unsteady or unreliable can damage careers. "One index to sound judgment," as Wohlstetter remarks, "is agreement with the hypotheses on which current department policy is based"; in the case of Pearl Harbor, the consensus held that the danger was sabotage by agents recruited from Hawaiians of Japanese ethnicity, not an air attack.

Still another impediment to sound judgment was that on several occasions before the attack, there had been credible warnings that war with Japan was about to break out. When it did not, intelligence officers were loath to repeat such warnings lest they be regarded as alarmists. Besides, people cannot keep themselves at peak alert all the time; they get tired. The more false alarms there are, the less alert they become. This may well have been true of the army and navy commanders in Hawaii, who felt they had already wasted time and resources on alarms issued by Washington that turned out to be false.

Finally, there was no overall commander of U.S. forces in Hawaii. Nor was there a joint Army-Navy staff. (The office of chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff did not yet exist.) In Washington, there were War and Navy departments, but there was no Department of Defense. The Army and Navy had their own separate intelligence services; little information was shared between them. There was no counterpart to the CIA or the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), and thus no "center for evaluating a

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mass of conflicting signals from specialized or partisan sources" (Wohlstetter). Missing, too, was any procedure for synthesizing confidential sources of information with what was publicly known about enemy intentions and capabilities.

The organizational problems were eventually corrected by the creation of the Defense Department, the CIA, and the DIA. No one has devised satisfactory correctives for the other problems that Wohlstetter identified.

A SECOND historical instance occurred during the Vietnam war. At the end of January 1968, during the Tet holiday period, the United States was stunned by an offensive mounted by Vietcong and North Vietnamese forces against the cities of South Vietnam.

As with Pearl Harbor, signs of the impending attack abounded. Indeed, through a communications mixup, some Vietcong jumped the gun and attacked the day before the beginning of the holiday period. Although that should have been recognized as a definitive warning, few defensive measures were taken; from the business-as-usual behavior of the U.S. and South Vietnamese military commanders, it is apparent that the scope and intensity of the Tet assault came as a complete surprise.*

Why? As in the case of Pearl Harbor, our commanders were distracted by what looked to them like a greater menace—the siege of our base at Khe Sanh, in the northern part of South Vietnam, where it seemed that the North's General Giap was trying to repeat his victory over the French at Dienbienphu in the first Vietnam war. This led the U.S. command to interpret warning signs of an attack on South Vietnam's cities as a diversionary tactic, designed to trick us into shifting troops away from Khe Sanh. For just as the Japanese had been too weak in 1941 to take on the United States in a war, so the enemy in Vietnam seemed too weak to achieve the more ambitious goal of taking over South Vietnam's cities.† At worst, we thought in our complacency, a Tet attack would be a last fling, like Hitler's 1944 assault on U.S. forces in the Ardennes (the Battle of the Bulge). Because we won that battle decisively, the German attack turned out to shorten the war. On the same reasoning, we could look forward to a Tet attack with equanimity.

We were handicapped in grasping the enemy's intentions not only by a mistaken analogy but also by cultural ignorance. We thought the Communists would not dare outrage South Vietnamese public opinion by violating the traditional Tet truce. An older tradition would have cast doubt on that expectation: in 1789, when the country was ruled by the hated Chinese, the Vietnamese rose in a surprise attack during Tet and won independence. There was also a mundane reason to schedule a major offensive during the Tet holiday: almost a third of the South Vietnamese army was expected to be on holiday leave.

In Vietnam, we used what we thought we knew in order to create a theory of what might happen. The theory was plausible, but erroneous.

FOR A third instance of this historical pattern, we may turn to the assault on Israel by Egypt and Syria in October 1973, which initiated the Yom Kippur war.

Because the bulk of the Israeli army consists of reserve formations that require a minimum of 48 hours to mobilize and reach the front, Israel is highly vulnerable to a surprise attack. Having launched a preemptive attack of its own in June 1967, Israel knew that the Arab states itched to return the compliment. There was no doubt who its enemies were, or what their options were: an attack from the south would come across the Suez Canal into Sinai, from the north across the cease-fire line in the Golan Heights.

Warnings in 1973 were abundant, but they were waved aside: Egypt and Syria achieved complete surprise. After the war, the reasons for this success were investigated at length by Israel's Agranat commission, an ad-hoc committee of notables not unlike our 9/11 commission. From its report we learn that the intelligence branch of Israel's armed forces, the only intelligence agency responsible for assessing threats of invasion, was convinced that Egypt and Syria knew they were too weak to prevail in a war with Israel. Like the United States at the time of Pearl Harbor, the prospective victim thought that its enemy needed more time to prepare a successful attack.

Although Israel's earlier, one-sided victory in the 1967 war had bred a certain contempt for its enemies—illustrating the Duke of Wellington's adage that a great victory is a great danger—Israeli intelligence was correct that Egypt and Syria were still

* See James J. Wirtz, *The Tet Offensive: Intelligence Failure in War* (1991).

† In fact the enemy *was* too weak to achieve its objectives; in the Tet offensive it suffered horrendous losses and was driven out of all the cities it attacked. The North Vietnamese and the Vietcong seem to have thought the offensive would end the war by causing the South Vietnamese regime to collapse; in this they were mistaken. As is well known, however, Tet did have a powerful effect on American public opinion, and one deeply injurious to the war effort.

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too weak to win. But again like America in 1941, Israel misunderstood its enemies' goals: Egypt and Syria could "win" just by fighting Israel to a draw, just as Japan thought it could preserve its honor by fighting the United States and losing.

In addition, and once again like Pearl Harbor, there had been a number of false alarms. Only a few months earlier, Israel had mobilized at great expense in the face of a warning that it was about to be attacked. A dissenting voice at the time was that of the chief of military intelligence, and his vindication in that earlier episode helped to persuade the Israeli cabinet to ignore later warning signs.

Reposing confidence in the accuracy of its intelligence, Israel had no plan for fighting off a full-scale attack before its reserves could be mobilized. And when the truth finally dawned, the few hours that remained were squandered; full mobilization was delayed, and units already on the front lines were not adequately alerted to what was about to happen.

The Agranat commission placed much of the blame for the fiasco on the incompetence of particular individuals, including the chief of military intelligence, his principal assistant, and the chief of the general staff. But it also criticized the structure of Israeli intelligence, which it found to be excessively centralized. Hence it offered a number of recommendations to insure "pluralism." In particular, it urged the appointment of a civilian intelligence adviser to the prime minister—ironically, a step toward the same type of structure that, according to the 9/11 commission, let us down in September 2001 because it was too *de*centralized. But then, just like Israel's centralized system, our previous, more "pluralistic" intelligence system also failed to foresee the Yom Kippur attack.

Pearl Harbor, Tet, Yom Kippur, 9/11: the sample is too small to prove definitively that surprise attacks have certain features in common. But it is nevertheless suggestive, and the examples I have given could easily be augmented.

In each case, the attacker is too weak to have much hope of prevailing, at least in conventional military terms; the victim's perception of this weakness contributes to the failure to anticipate attack; the victim thinks, often with reason, that the principal danger lies elsewhere, or in the future, or both; the victim lacks a deep understanding of the attacker's intentions and capabilities, and so bases his expectations on what he, the victim, would do in the attacker's place; the victim interprets warning signs to fit this preconception; the victim is lulled by false alarms or deliberate deception; the victim is in a state of denial concerning the forms of attack that are the hardest to defend against; intelligence officers are reluctant to challenge their superiors' opinions; and warnings to local commanders lack clarity and credibility.

Senator Susan Collins, the sponsor of the bill that eventually emerged as the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, has been quoted as saying that "just as the National Security Act of 1947 [which established the CIA] was passed to prevent another Pearl Harbor, the Intelligence Reform Act will help us prevent another 9/11." What she overlooked is the fact that 9/11 *was* another Pearl Harbor. Although deficiencies in the organization of intelligence may have contributed to the success of both attacks—just as, in Israel, they contributed to the success of the Yom Kippur surprise attack—it is far from clear that the structure of the victim's intelligence service was a salient factor. This is grounds for concern in light of the heavy emphasis placed on reorganizing our intelligence system by both the 9/11 commission and the Intelligence Reform Act.

The causes of a nation's vulnerability to surprise attack seem intractable. This is especially true for a country like the United States, which faces a multitude of potential enemies, including those, like al Qaeda, with a much larger range of potential targets to choose from than Japan had in 1941. It is impossible to be strong everywhere, or to respond to every alarm with costly defensive measures (like grounding all civil aviation, as in the wake of 9/11), or to eavesdrop on every plotter.

Well in advance of 9/11, it was known that terrorists might use hijacked planes as missiles. But the possibility seemed remote, while taking effective measures against it would have been very costly.

A subtle but significant cost of such defensive measures, especially those that stress heightened alertness and frequent warnings, is the lulling ("boy crying wolf") effect of false alarms; the more there are, the likelier it is that true alarms will be ignored. The Israelis disregarded the signs of an imminent attack by the Egyptians and Syrians in October 1973 not only because they thought the probability low but also out of a deceptive sense of security induced by their previous, costly mobilization. Before 9/11, too, the probability of attacks on the continental United States was thought to be low, and the cost of defensive measures too high. Indeed, one of the special factors that continue to make it difficult to defend the United States

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against a surprise attack is an individualistic mentality that places a very high value on privacy, autonomy, and convenience, and as a result greatly resents the restrictions entailed by effective security measures until the danger becomes palpable.

If false alarms create a lulling effect, an attack, when it comes, can create a "hyperalert effect"—increasing the risk of another surprise attack by overconcentrating on preventing a repetition of the previous one. We may be expending too many resources on screening airline passengers while downplaying serious potential threats to other parts of our transportation system.* A hyperalert state may also precipitate a flood of warnings that turn out to be false alarms, as has certainly been our experience since 9/11; this creates still more lulling costs.

EVEN WITHOUT such distractions, intelligence agencies cannot collect and analyze data across the entire spectrum of possible surprise attacks. Intelligence officers determine where the greatest dangers lie and, having made that determination, inevitably give greater weight to information that bears on those dangers than to information concerning more remote threats. This gives rise to the paradox that a surprise attack is more likely to succeed if it has a low probability of success and if the attacker is weak.

On both counts, the prospective victim is likely to discount the danger. In addition, since the number of possible low-probability attacks is much greater than the number of high-probability ones, a potential victim will marshal his defensive resources to protect the high-probability targets of greatest value, leaving underprotected the immense number of lower-valued, low-probability ones. Realizing, too, that an enemy who wants to achieve strategic surprise will pick one of those inferior targets, and is therefore unlikely to obtain a decisive victory, the potential victim will rationally decline to invest a great deal in defensive measures, especially since the cost of defending against the entire spectrum of low-probability attacks by weak adversaries (who may, moreover, be numerous) is prohibitive.

For the weak, surprise attacks are a favorite tactic because they are a force multiplier. They tend to be wild gambles. Yet the attacker, weak as he may be, gets to pick the time, place, and means of attack; unless the victim is exceptionally lucky, the plan cannot be discovered in advance. Surprise gives the attacker a built-in advantage that assures a reasonable probability of at least a local or short-term success. The Pearl Harbor, Tet, Yom Kippur, and 9/11 attacks achieved such successes. When an attacker is willing to settle for that, there is little the victim can do to prevent the attack from happening.

A final consideration is that the more sensitive a warning system, the greater the risk of the victim's refraining from a response altogether or responding mistakenly by means of a preemptive strike on the supposed attacker. As Thomas Schelling put it in *The Strategy of Conflict* (1980), a warning system "may cause us to identify an attacking plane as a seagull, and do nothing, or it may cause us to identify a seagull as an attacking plane, and provoke our inadvertent attack on the enemy." This is another reason to doubt the wisdom of seeking a hair-trigger defense against surprise attack.

Still, although surprise attacks cannot reliably be prevented across the board, some can be. Others can be deterred, and the worst consequences of those that do occur can be mitigated, for example by stocking vaccines in anticipation of a possible bioterrorist attack that may not be preventable. But reorganizing the intelligence system along the lines proposed by the 9/11 commission, and adopted to a considerable extent by Congress in the Intelligence Reform Act, is an implausible response to the problem of preventing or defending against surprise attacks.

The act's central thrust is to centralize the control of intelligence in the person of the Director of National Intelligence, who will be too busy, and too remote from the operational level of intelligence collection and analysis, to establish priorities among threatened attacks. Worse, if Americans believe that the Intelligence Reform Act has fixed the system—if, indeed, they believe that *any* reforms can insure against intelligence failures—they may be less willing to support the strengthening of other elements of an integrated system of national defense. These elements include deterrence, border defense, the guarding and hardening of potential targets, and mitigative measures should an attack occur. Such a relaxation of effort would be an invitation to disaster.

* On this point, see James Fallows, "Success without Victory," *Atlantic Monthly*, January-February 2005.

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Can the UN Be Fixed?

Michael Soussan

THE LAST few years have hardly been kind to the United Nations. Accustomed to regarding itself as the world's indispensable institution, it has suffered a series of debilitating blows, raising questions about its long-term viability. The immediate source of its troubles, observers from across the political spectrum agree, has been the role played by the world body in the various stages of the war in Iraq.

In early 2003, the diplomatic debacle leading up to armed action against Saddam Hussein made the UN appear all but irrelevant in responding to a major international crisis, especially in the terms urged by its most important member, the United States. Then, some months after the successful completion of the U.S.-led military campaign, a devastating terrorist strike against the UN's Baghdad headquarters brought into doubt the organization's ability to work in an environment increasingly marked by violence against diplomats, aid workers, and other civilians. More recently, the UN's credibility has been shaken to the core by revelations concerning its mismanagement and corruption in overseeing the Oil-for-Food program for Iraq. In sum, President Bush was underlining the obvious when he appointed John F. Bolton, a blunt critic of the institution, as our new UN ambassador. As Secretary-General Kofi Annan himself put it realistically, the United Nations today is "passing through the gravest crisis of its existence."

Annan's own response to this situation has been to open a new chapter in an already long-running debate on how to reform the UN. Over the course of 2005, member states will consider more than 100 proposals drawn up by a group known officially as the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change—a collection of "eminent persons" appointed by the secretary-general himself. Having cast the organization's crisis in existential terms, Annan asked the panel—and, by implication, the world at large—an existential question: can the UN continue to function on the basis laid out at its creation in 1945, or are radical changes needed? The panel did propose changes, but whether they will improve the UN's performance is another matter.

THE PANEL'S report, released in early December, aims to improve the UN's ability to deal with several different "clusters of threats," from poverty and epidemic disease to genocide, terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction. The report is itself a mixed bag. Much of the document, predictably, is devoted to the sort of exhortations that have always been a hallmark of UN literature: member states are urged to "rededicate themselves

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to the principles of the UN Charter," to ratify recent treaties if they have not done so already, to live up to their peace-keeping pledges, to pay their dues, and so forth.

But the report also includes a range of concrete proposals for action. A number of these are structural in nature, the most controversial being a recommendation for expanding membership in the Security Council, the UN's sanctum sanctorum. It is the Security Council, after all, not the much larger General Assembly, that has the power to impose sanctions and authorize armed intervention. The body is currently composed of fifteen members, five of which—the U.S., the United Kingdom, China, France, and Russia—have permanent seats and wield a veto.

In the panel's view, widening participation in this critical decision-making body would give the UN greater legitimacy, especially among the nations that contribute money and troops to peace-keeping operations. The report offers two different formulas for achieving this goal, both of which would bring the total membership in the Security Council to 24 (with varying combinations of permanent and temporary seats) but without adding new veto powers. Germany and Japan would be the most obvious candidates for permanent seats, but South Africa, Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Brazil, Argentina, Turkey, Egypt, and others would vie for them as well.

Another structural proposal would give every member state a seat on the UN Human Rights Commission. For years, the commission has been paralyzed by the obstructionism of its own members, many of whom are representatives of the very states responsible for the world's most outrageous violations of human rights. Rather than establish new criteria for membership, which the panel deemed "too political" a move, the report suggests making the Human Rights Commission as large as the General Assembly itself.

But how should a reconfigured UN *act*? The panel suggests several changes in the organization's mandate and powers. In one proposal, the Security Council is urged to target the leadership of an uncooperative country with "smart sanctions," isolating the government while providing for the humanitarian needs of the people. On the question of preventing genocide, the basic problem, the panel argues, is not a lack of authority but a lack of political will; if the Security Council were to conclude that a large-scale ethnic slaughter constituted a "threat to international peace and security," it is already fully empowered to intervene under the terms of the UN Charter.

In the fight against terrorism, the panel's principal achievement is to suggest the adoption of an official definition of the phenomenon. This may seem a pathetically minor feat, but no international convention on terrorism—twelve are already on the books—has accomplished it, for the simple reason that groups seen as terrorists by some states are often hailed as freedom fighters by others. The panel, by contrast, defines terrorism in simple, direct language: "any action . . . intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or non-combatants, when the purpose . . . is to intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act."

GIVEN THE composition of the panel—to say nothing of the usual quality of UN "consensus" documents—the fact that the report was able to reach *any* substantive conclusions on controversial issues is, in itself, a small miracle. Though a majority of the panel's members were from democracies—the UK, France, Australia, India, Russia, Japan, Norway, Thailand, Nigeria, Ghana, and the U.S.—its "eminent" members also included former Russian Foreign Minister (and Soviet KGB leader) Yevgeni Primakov and diplomats from dictatorial states like China, Egypt, and Pakistan. The only American representative was Brent Scowcroft, a former National Security Adviser and consummate "realist." Such a group was never going to propose a revolution at the UN.

Still, small steps do count for something. The most welcome aspect of the report is its proposal on terrorism, which, if adopted, would finally bring the UN into the post-9/11 world. It is already a historic first for a UN organ to endorse a definition of terrorism applying equally to every group that deliberately targets civilians. For decades, Arab and Muslim countries have refused to support any anti-terrorism measure that failed to provide a loophole for Palestinian terror groups, arguing, in effect, that Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank made its civilians a fair target.

What remains to be seen is whether this definition will affect how UN officials react to attacks by democracies *against* terrorist leaders. Old habits die hard. Early last year, Annan responded to Israel's elimination of the Hamas leaders Sheikh Ahmad Yassin and Abdel Aziz Rantisi with a "strong condemnation" of what he called "extrajudicial assassinations." The secretary-general was also critical of last fall's assault on the terrorist den of Falluja; in an October 31, 2004 letter to Iyad

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Allawi, the interim Iraqi prime minister, Annan asserted that the use of force against insurgents only risked "deepening" the Iraqi people's "sense of alienation." To which the Iraqi leader replied: "I was a little surprised by the lack of any mention in your letter of the atrocities which these [terror] groups have committed."

Then there is the matter of genocide. Here too the panel deserves credit for recognizing the problem, but its treatment of it amounts to little more than an evasion. Though the report is correct in stating that the Security Council can invoke a threat to international peace and security to justify the use of force in stopping genocide, it rarely does so.

Consider Rwanda. When action was called for in April 1994, the Security Council's response consisted of ordering the immediate evacuation of UN personnel, including blue-helmeted soldiers who might have contained the murderous rampage. A similar refusal of responsibility held for Kosovo in 1999, when the U.S had to skirt the Security Council because of a threatened veto by Russia, which considered the Albanians living in that province to be a threat not to international peace but to its own traditional ally, Serbia. The panel argues that "the principle of non-intervention" in the internal affairs of member states "cannot be used to protect genocidal acts," but, in reality, that is exactly what happens, again and again.

Will adding more seats to the UN's key organs change this pattern? And, more generally, will such a move improve the organization's performance on the wider "cluster of threats" identified by the panel?

Chairs do not make decisions, the people who sit on them do. For the past two years, Syria has held one of the rotating seats on the Security Council, despite its continued support for terrorism against Israel and against Iraq's nascent democracy. Has this example of "inclusiveness" enhanced the UN's legitimacy, let alone its effectiveness against the threat of terrorism?

The same question can be asked of plans to expand the UN Human Rights Commission to include every member nation, and the answer is even more self-evident. Just last May, the commission voted to renew Sudan's seat until 2007—this, in the wake of the Sudanese government's widely documented genocide against its own citizens in Darfur. The U.S. delegate walked out in protest. Exactly what purpose would be served by admitting still more states guilty of mass murder?

THIS BRINGS us to the core issue, ignored by the High-Level Panel as by every previous reform initiative. Membership in the UN has never been contingent on good behavior. Since its inception, the organization has included a great many states that openly violated its founding principles, spelled out most explicitly in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. The Soviet Union, with its permanent seat on the Security Council, was the original and most glaring beneficiary of such accommodation, but in the postwar period the UN also put out a welcome mat for a range of unspeakably brutal revolutionary movements and tyrannical regimes. There were occasional dissenters from this orthodoxy—one thinks, in particular, of Daniel Patrick Moynihan who served as the American envoy in the mid-1970's—but UN "neutrality" on the internal character of its member states has faced no sustained challenge.

Until now, that is. After the attacks of 9/11, the Bush administration adopted a radical new policy—one that would not be bound by the UN Charter, which guarantees the sovereignty of all its members. The Bush Doctrine refuses to pretend that there is no difference between democracy and tyranny. At the center of this transformation in American policy is the long entanglement between the U.S. and the UN over how to handle Iraq.

When the UN gave its imprimatur to the first Gulf war, led by President George H.W. Bush, it was on the condition that it be fought solely for the purpose of liberating Kuwait, not in order to supplant the ruler in Baghdad. Having no interest in nation-building or in a lengthy occupation—and believing, moreover, that Saddam Hussein's regime would fall on its own—the first Bush administration accepted this restriction.

For more than a decade after the war, the international community then chose to keep Iraq under sanctions while maintaining formal respect for the sovereignty of Saddam Hussein's regime. The impact on the civilian population of Iraq was devastating. By the most conservative estimates, a quarter of a million children died from waterborne diseases and inadequate nutrition in the years following the first Gulf war. This led to the Oil-for-Food program, set up by the UN in order to allow Iraq to sell oil for money that was supposed to be used exclusively for desperately needed humanitarian goods. The program grew into a $64-billion-dollar operation, the largest in the UN's history—and also, as we have had occasion to learn, the most corrupt.

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Because Saddam Hussein was prepared to let his people suffer rather than compromise with his enemies, there was no way the international community could provide for the country's civilians without strengthening the Iraqi dictator—at least, not so long as the UN Security Council refused to confront the fundamental contradiction of a policy that aimed both to "enforce" and to "alleviate" the sanctions, and did neither well. After the largest military coalition in history bombed Saddam Hussein into submission in 1991, the international community had an obligation to secure a better future for Iraq. That responsibility could not be met, however, unless the UN was prepared to cease equating Iraq's sovereignty with Saddam Hussein's right to rule, and to begin equating it with the Iraqi people's right to self-government. This it would not do.

TO DEAL with the conflict between its inveterate respect for sovereigns, no matter how murderous, and its ostensible commitment to human rights, the UN has long resorted to grand declarations that are moral in appearance but not in substance. The new report is no different. "What we seek to protect reflects what we value," the panel declares. "The Charter of the United Nations seeks to protect all states, not because they are intrinsically good, but because they are necessary to achieve the dignity, worth, and safety of their citizens."

How do genocidal states fit into this picture? As early as 1795, Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher who first dreamed up the vision that would inspire the UN, had foreseen the contradiction inherent in the inclusion of unaccountable, war-prone states in an international body dedicated to peace. Thus, one of his key prerequisites for such a world organization was that no member state should be governed by a tyrant. It was with this end in mind that President Woodrow Wilson fought World War I to make "the world safe for democracy."

In a sense, the UN was born into a world that was not yet ready for it. But now that a majority—in fact, over 60 percent—of the organization's members are democracies, there is an opportunity for greater democratic activism within the UN system, even despite the obvious differences that have separated the U.S. from a number of its European allies.

At the 2004 General Assembly, the U.S. took the lead on this issue by proposing to create (and to provide start-up capital for) a "UN Fund for Democracy." Such an agency would mark an important change in the organization's internal culture, putting democracy on the same *institutional* footing as world hunger, children's rights, and economic development, all of which already have their own specialized bodies within the UN.

But even this would not suffice to transform the world body. As the French political philosopher Raymond Aron once noted, great institutions are always subject to "the ideas in the heads of the people who populate them." Until UN leaders are ready to ask themselves how exactly a brutal or tyrannical regime contributes to achieving "the dignity, worth, and safety" of its citizens, no genuine change can be expected to take place in the way they do business. In other words, change must be premised on the idea that membership carries responsibilities, just as it does in NATO, the European Union, and the World Trade Organization. Not even a bridge club can function coherently if members are not required to follow its rules.

THE ORIGINAL drafters of the UN Charter understood this, which is why they included a provision that would allow the UN to kick out its worst members. According to Article 6, a member that "has persistently violated the principles contained in the . . . charter may be expelled from the organization by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council." Despite flagrant and persistent violations of the UN Charter over the past 60 years, Article 6 has never been invoked, and the panel's report has no thoughts about enforcing it.

It is difficult to think of a legal or moral argument that would require the UN to maintain the membership of a state guilty of genocide or other crimes against humanity. The mere threat of expulsion would be a frightening prospect for any dictatorship, since losing its UN membership would mean losing its claim to sovereignty as well as the protections against foreign intervention spelled out in Article 2 of the Charter. No other reform—certainly none of those contemplated by Kofi Annan's hand-picked panel—could provide a more powerful tool to enforce accountability.

Dangerous? After all, it might be argued, any move to activate the relevant provision of the Charter might inspire a countermove on the part of others to single out and exclude a democracy like Israel, as the UN General Assembly has done consistently in the past. But this would be a losing game, as anybody in his right mind could see in an instant. No such proposal could get past the Security Council.

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A stronger objection is that the idea is unrealistic. Certainly the mind boggles at the thought of, say, France, which recently maneuvered to reduce scrutiny of Sudan at the UN Human Rights Commission, getting behind such an approach. But it is even less realistic to expect significant improvements in the UN's performance in the absence of measures that would enforce greater accountability on its worst members.

The entire point is to reverse the UN's current approach to politics and place the body squarely behind the principle of genuine self-governance. The choice is between Kafka and Kant, between an ever more pointlessly expansive bureaucracy (as the High-Level Panel proposes) and a vision of world organization that gives pride of place, in practice as well as in rhetoric, to democracy.

The measures recommended by the UN panel might help the world body do a marginally better job of responding to the "cluster of threats" it has identified. But each of those threats—extreme poverty, environmental disaster, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime, interstate warfare, terrorism, civil war—stems in large part from, or is exacerbated by, tyrannical regimes and societies emerging from their rule. By contrast, no two democracies have ever gone to war against each other, and, as a whole, democracies have proved far better than any other political arrangement at raising the living standards of their populations, managing environmental challenges, keeping tabs on weapons of mass destruction, overcoming civil disputes, and fighting terrorism.

In trying to come up with reforms that would help the UN deal with the 21st century, the sages appointed by Kofi Annan overlooked the overarching threat that led to the creation of the United Nations in the first place. If millions of Iraqi fingers stained with purple ink do not remind them of how ready people are, given the chance, to confront and overcome tyranny, one can only wonder whether anything ever will.

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The Islamists' Other Weapon

Paul Marshall

ISLAMISTS ARE among the most garrulous of enemies: in a plethora of videotapes, audiotapes, declarations, books, letters, *fatwas*, magazines, and websites, they have explained their actions repeatedly and at length. Each bombing or other atrocity seems to be accompanied by the equivalent of a press kit, attempting to justify the action in terms of Islamic teaching and history. The goal of these extremists, as they have announced again and again, is nothing less than to restore a unified Muslim *ummah* (community), one ruled by a new caliphate, organized to wage jihad against the rest of the world, and, above all, governed by what they regard as the immutable divine law declared by God to Muhammad—the *shari'a*.

Indeed, nothing has been more central to the rhetoric of Osama bin Laden and his followers than denunciations of democracy, legislatures, and "man-made law." The great crime of the rulers of Saudi Arabia, bin Laden declared, is "ruling by laws other than those which Allah has revealed," and thereby making it "incumbent on [their] subjects, by Allah's command, to rebel." To Iraqis contemplating participation in the January 30 elections, he warned that their constitution was *jahiliyya* (pre-Islamic) and that Muslims are allowed only to elect a leader for whom "Islam is the only source of the rulings and laws." The terrorist group Ansar al-Sunnah seconded this notion, telling Iraqis not to vote—and threatening bloodshed if they did—because "democracy is a Greek word meaning the rule of the people. . . . This concept is apostasy." Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the head of al Qaeda's Iraq affiliate, declared "a fierce war on this evil principle of democracy."

Despite these repeated challenges to Western notions of law and political legitimacy, American policy-makers have shown remarkably little interest in Islamist ideology, and seem content to treat it as simple fanaticism. This is a disabling mistake, comparable to trying to fight Communism without bothering to learn about Marxism. If we are to defeat the jihadists and radical Islam, especially on the battleground of ideas, it is imperative that we better understand their far-reaching ideological ambitions.

ISLAMIC "LAW" is how *shari'a* is usually rendered, but this definition is not expansive enough. Although *shari'a* covers matters of crime and judicial procedure, it provides guidelines for a range of other activities as well, from marriage and economics to spiritual and moral issues like prayer, pilgrimage, and ritual cleansing. The original sense of the term is "the path" or "the way," so it is better compared with the traditional Jewish understand-

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ing of biblical and rabbinic law than with a Western legal code. To believing Muslims of every variety, criticism of *shari'a* as such often sounds strange because, much as they might disagree with stoning adulterous women or cutting off the hands of thieves, the word is roughly synonymous with "justice" or "goodness."

There are several different schools of *shari'a*, all of them efforts to synthesize material from the Qur'an, the sayings of Muhammad (*hadith*), and accounts of his life into a systematic body of guidance. The most influential approach among Sunnis is the Hanafi school; among the Shiites it is the Jafari school. Historically, however, *shari'a* has seldom been the sole source of legitimacy in Islamic polities. Muslim governments have freely adopted local and customary law and, in recent centuries, have borrowed also from Western legal codes.

Most Muslims still live in communities governed by their own distinctive combination of Islamic law and local traditions. When given the choice—as in Muslim-majority democracies like Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and Turkey—they have consistently rejected extreme versions of *shari'a*. Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front might have instituted such an extreme version had the army allowed it to win the election there in 1992, but its campaigning downplayed this part of its program. Similar parties in Malaysia, Pakistan, and Nigeria have managed to win elections only at the provincial and state level.

Despite this lack of popular support, however, radical interpretations of Islamic law have spread dramatically during the past quarter-century, thanks in large part to the aggressive tactics of Islamists and their state patrons. Worse, in a growing number of Muslim countries, those who have taken a stand against extreme versions of *shari'a* have been vilified, ostracized, imprisoned, beaten, and even killed.

Agitation for extreme versions of *shari'a* is nothing new in the Islamic world. It has been central to the agendas of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and the Deobandi movement in Pakistan and India for some 80 years. Over the past quarter-century, however, the cause has received an unprecedented boost from two rather different sources.

The first of these is Saudi Arabia. The Saudis have long maintained that their own literalist Wahhabi school of *shari'a* is the only valid one within the Sunni tradition (leaving aside the still more outrageous heresies, as they see it, of Shiite Muslims). Since the early 1980's, the Saudis have spent billions of dollars to build mosques and *madrassas* (religious schools) in every corner of the Muslim world for propagating their intolerant creed. Though Osama bin Laden has condemned the House of Saud for its supposed infidelity—and himself hopes to displace the royal family— these institutions have trained vast numbers of actual and would-be jihadists.

Even now, in the wake of 9/11 and while facing a serious domestic threat from al Qaeda, the Saudi regime rejects any law or legislation outside its own narrow tradition as an "infidel" accretion to the pristine teachings of Islam. As Crown Prince Abdullah stressed in a statement late last year, the Saudis are willing to consider any number of political and social reforms—just as long as the centrality of Islamic law is not open to debate. In Saudi Arabia, as in regimes and movements influenced by its example, questioning the government can be regarded as tantamount to questioning God; political opposition can be seen as apostasy or blasphemy, and punishable as such.

Another main source for the spread of an extremist version of *shari'a* has been Iran, where the Ayatollah Khomeini introduced an unprecedented form of Islamic rule after overthrowing the shah in 1979. By contrast with traditional Shiite practice, wherein spiritual leaders have taken a "prophetic" role in challenging public authorities, Khomeini declared himself head of government and claimed almost divine powers; his own words, regardless of their relation to sacred texts, would define the boundaries of Islam.

The Iranian fundamental law issued in Khomeini's name bars from political office non-Muslims or Muslims who do not demonstrate allegiance to the mullahs' rule, which is referred to as the "guardianship of the jurist." The law allows political participation—the formation of parties, rights of assembly, a free press—but only on condition of its "compatibility with standards of *shari'a*," a restriction that has allowed the authorities to suppress almost every meaningful expression of democratic opposition.

The penal side of Iranian law is equally harsh. For an unmarried perpetrator, the punishment for adultery is 100 lashes; for a married one, death by stoning. It is a crime to listen to certain forms of music or to watch certain movies, and employment is restricted to those who believe in the "guardianship of the jurist." The penalty for killing a woman or a non-Muslim is less than that for killing a Muslim man, and there is no penalty at all for killing "apostates" or members of

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unrecognized religious minorities like the Bahais.

Despite their strong mutual animosity, Wahhabism and Khomeinism have exerted a revolutionary influence on the Muslim world over the past generation. In country after country, and often in the face of long-standing traditions of moderation, these imported ideologies have provided support and encouragement to local extremists, giving rise to an enormously destructive view of Islam's demands.

THE EFFECTS of this process may be seen in a brief survey of the landscape.

Pakistan was established in 1947 as a Muslim-majority state but not as an Islamic one. As the independence leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah emphasized, "You may belong to any religion or caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the state." Indeed, the first temporary president of Pakistan's constituent assembly was a Hindu "untouchable."

By 1973, however, a new constitution had been established, renaming the country the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and declaring Islam the state religion. All existing laws, it was declared, "shall be brought in conformity with the injunctions of Islam as laid down in the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah." Though Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's plans to implement *shari'a* were stopped in 1977 when General Zia Ul-Haq overthrew him, Zia himself introduced ordinances based on *hudud* (Islamic criminal law) two years later, including punishments like amputation and stoning. In the 1980's, blasphemy laws were introduced, subjecting those who "defiled" the name of the prophet to the death penalty. More recent legislation makes it possible to imprison for three years any member of the minority Ahmadi sect who calls himself a Muslim or does anything that "outrages the religious feelings of Muslims."

Under Pakistan's influence (and with considerable support from Saudi Arabia), the Taliban regime in Afghanistan began in 1994 to institute its own uncompromising version of *shari'a*. No formal legislation was involved. Instead, judges or others claiming Taliban authority simply enforced what they believed Islam to require. Women were forbidden to go to school, work outside the home, or travel without a male relative. Apostates and homosexuals were killed, and music was banned.

Even now, under Afghanistan's American-supported democratic government, many of these measures remain in place. The current head of the supreme court, Fazul Hadi Shinwari, has declared that, under his jurisdiction, adulterers will be stoned, thieves will have their hands amputated, and those in possession of alcohol will receive 80 lashes. A non-Muslim, as he told National Public Radio, should be invited to accept Islam; if he does not convert, he must obey Islam; if he refuses such accommodations, the only option, Shinwari said, is to "behead him."

In Sudan, the long-time ruler General Jafaar al-Numeiri introduced radical *shari'a* in 1983, partly to win the support of the Islamic Charter Front, an offshoot of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. In one especially theatrical show of piety, thousands of bottles of whiskey were immediately dumped into the Nile. More gruesome measures soon followed. In just the first year of the new laws, 58 public amputations were carried out in Khartoum province alone, including twelve "cross-limb" procedures in which a hand and a foot were cut from opposite sides of the offender's body. Public floggings were broadcast daily on national television, and public hangings, followed by crucifixion, were carried out at sites built especially for the purpose. In 1985, seventy-six-year-old Mahmoud Mohamed Taha, perhaps the country's leading religious scholar, was hanged, having been convicted of apostasy for criticizing the new laws. Opposition to these barbaric practices—which were inflicted for the most part on poor Christians from southern Sudan—renewed a rebellion that, until the recent peace agreement, claimed more than two million lives.

In Nigeria, *shari'a* personal-status law has been a part of the legal system for decades, but in 1999 Alhaji Ahmed Sani, the governor of the state of Zamfara in the northwest, announced that he would institute a more comprehensive system of *shari'a* and assign responsibility for enforcement to the *hizbah* (religious police). Eleven other northern and central states quickly followed suit, closing churches and non-Muslim schools and mandating "Islamic" dress. In 2002, Sani took the additional step of requiring all residents of Zamfara to use Arabic, a language few speak. In the last five years, tens of thousands of people have died in *shari'a*-related violence in Nigeria. The governor of Yobe state has said he will defend the new laws even at the cost of civil war, and Sani has urged the advocates of *shari'a* to form their own armies to defend Muslims and promote Islam.

MILITANT VERSIONS of *shari'a* have also made inroads in the more moderate corners of the Islamic world. In Malaysia, the Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) came to power in the northern

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state of Kelantan in 1990, promptly prohibiting the sale of alcohol to Muslims and banning gambling, discotheques, and unisex hair salons. Three years later, the state introduced a *shari'a*-based criminal code, though it was quickly overturned by the central government. More recently, PAS has experienced several electoral setbacks at the state level, but it remains the only viable opposition in the national legislature and, should the current secular coalition stumble, would stand a chance of forming a government.

Indonesia, too, has experienced only mixed success in resisting Islamist influence. Lawmakers have roundly defeated efforts to incorporate *shari'a* into the constitution, and the terrorist group Jemaah Islamiah, which carried out the October 2002 bombing in Bali and other attacks, has largely been discredited. But Islamic radicals have managed to advance their agenda through intimidation and piecemeal legislation, especially at the local level. In Sulawesi, Sumatra, eastern Java, Banten, Flores, Sumba, and the Bandung area, they have forced women to wear *hijabs*, attacked nightclubs, and forcibly closed shops at prayer times. Though lacking in enforcement authority, southern Sulawesi has even enacted Islamic criminal laws.

Indeed, almost everywhere one looks in the Muslim world, Islamists have grown more assertive and violent in advancing their program. In Kenya, the chairman of the country's council of imams and preachers has warned that unless their demands for *shari'a*-based laws are met, Muslims in the northeastern provinces will break away. In Tanzania, Islamic radicals have bombed bars and attacked women whom they consider immodestly dressed. Chechnyan rebels have adopted *shari'a* law from Sudan. The draft Palestinian constitution, in a bow to Hamas and Islamic Jihad, declares that the "principles of the Islamic *shari'a* are a main source for legislation." And so on.

Western attention to the widening influence of extreme versions of *shari'a* has been, at best, intermittent. News coverage has tended to focus on sensational cases involving the status of women or the imposition of inhuman punishments, as when provincial courts in Nigeria have sentenced women guilty of adultery to death by stoning. Such publicity is vital—it has saved the lives of a number of victimized women—but its effect has been to make *shari'a* seem a less formidable threat, an unfortunate recrudescence of medieval penology rather than a comprehensive ideological challenge.

As applied in an increasing number of countries, however, extreme *shari'a* does far more than mete out cruel punishment. With its untrained judges, vague and haphazard standards, nonjudicial decrees, and extrajudicial enforcement, it undermines all efforts at establishing the rule of law. By treating women and non-Muslims as second-class citizens or nonpersons, it systematically deprives Islamic societies of the full benefit of their human resources. Worst of all, perhaps, by turning political dissent and debate into crimes against God, the *shari'a* of the Islamists closes off any possibility of genuine democratic and religious reform.

Extreme versions of *shari'a* may thus be the most serious obstacle to the political and religious reform in Muslim societies—and Arab ones in particular—that is needed if democracy is to be established and they are to stop serving as incubators for martyrdom-minded jihadists. For the security of the West, to say nothing of the cause of human rights, reversing the legal and social advances of the Islamists is every bit as important as defeating their armies on the field of battle.

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A Yankees Fan in Red Sox Nation

Charles Dellheim

Boston's Fenway Park is about a six-minute walk from where I work. The "Green Monster" is not really visible from my office on Bay State Road, but come April I know that the academic year is ending, and the baseball season starting, when I see Red Sox nation heading to that legendary field of dreams—dreams that never quite came true until this past autumn. Thanks to my job, I also have what every Bostonian would kill for: a parking space near the park.

By rights, I too should be a Sox fan, and last autumn should have been the most joyful of seasons for me. The self-styled "idiots" finally pinned the pinstriped, blue-capped monster from the Bronx that had been making them miserable (or giving them an excuse for misery) since 1920. That was the year Babe Ruth left the team for the New York Yankees, not without allegedly bequeathing the dreaded "curse of the Bambino" that the faithful have long yearned to reverse. But I am about as likely to root, root, root for the Boston home team as I am to convert to another religion. For me, shifting allegiances now would be a lot more ignominious than blowing, as my beloved New York Yankees did, a 3-0 lead in last fall's American League Championship Series (ALCS).

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It could have been different, I know, and it almost was. What if Yankee pitcher Mariano Rivera had not given up a lead-off walk to the Sox's Kevin Millar in the ninth inning of game four at Fenway? What if Tony Clark's long shot into right field hadn't bounced into the stands for only a ground-rule double, thus preventing Ruben Sierra from scoring what might have been the winning run for the Yankees?

Great writers can get away with imagining counterfactual scenarios, but historians are discouraged from indulging in "what-if" speculation; finding out what really happened, and why, is hard enough. So a friend and colleague, a triumphant Sox fan, reminded me the day after we (the Yankees) lost the chance to play in the World Series. Those who forget history may be doomed to repeat it, but those who depend on history may be doomed to regret it: the only seeming ghost who showed up at Yankee Stadium this October was an old man dressed in a white sheet with Ruth handwritten on his chest. He was a heartening sight, but he didn't pitch and couldn't bat—which is more or less what happened to my team at the end of the 2004 pennant race.

As with most of us, my baseball loyalties go back to the early days of childhood, the age before we become too embarrassed or ambivalent to choose sides. Even so, making a choice was not simple for me. I was the product of a mixed mar-

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riage: my mother rooted for the Brooklyn Dodgers and my father for the New York Giants. Growing up in Brownsville, she had had an easy time of it: she could pick the Dodgers, the Dodgers, or the Dodgers. My father, who was not to the diamond born, had more complicated allegiances. In Germany, where he grew up, baseball was not an option; but then, for a Jew, neither was staying in Mutterstadt, where his ancestors had lived for two centuries. Luckily he made it to America in April 1938, landing in New York and ending up eventually in the Manhattan neighborhood of Washington Heights. Then so full of German refugees that it was nicknamed the "Fourth Reich," the area is now home to baseball-loving, Spanish-speaking immigrants like the star Red Sox outfielder Manny Ramirez. In classic fashion, my father learned to be an American while rooting for the Giants at the Polo Grounds, not far from his apartment.

Where did this leave me, born in the early 1950's? I may not have been a great diplomat by nature, but I was smart enough not to choose one parent's team over the other. I took the third option—the Yankees—which also happened to be the best. When in due course the Dodgers decamped for Los Angeles and the Giants for San Francisco, both my parents and younger twin brothers followed my lead. Since then, we have all been Yankee fans, passionate and devoted. My most prized childhood possessions were the baseball glove I oiled, tied, and never tired of using, and my Yankee uniform. I wore it when I played ball, and sometimes I donned my pinstripes and cap just because I felt like it.

Nothing mattered to me the way the Yankees mattered. On weekends during the season, I watched every game I could on Channel 11 or, if necessary, followed the play-by-play on my portable RCA Victor transistor radio. Red Barber (the old redhead), Phil Rizzuto (Scooter), and Mel Allen (the man without a nickname) were my guides. Even today, never a smoker and not much of a drinker, I can still remember fragments of the cigarette and beer commercials: "My beer is Rheingold the dry beer/You can find it wherever you buy beer/It's not bitter, not sweet. . . ."

Night games were a problem: I couldn't stay up to watch, but I couldn't wait to find out the score. So my parents hit on a compromise that helped me avoid flunking out of P.S. 130. On the little aluminum vinyl-topped table that sat next to my bed at 10 Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn, they wrote the results of the game on a piece of paper. I was usually up so early to get the score that the only thing on television was a test pattern—this was, after all, the late 1950's.

"The Bronx, no thonx." Ogden Nash's famous quip would have been heresy to me, but the truth is that I usually traveled to the Bronx for one reason only: Yankee Stadium. I began going as a child, often for twilight doubleheaders, with my father in one hand and my glove in the other. I grew up with the great teams of the late 1950's and early 60's, when the batting order seemed indistinguishable from the cosmic order: Richardson, Kubek, Maris, Mantle, Skowron, Berra, Boyer, and Howard, followed by the hurler of the day. Whitey Ford was my favorite pitcher because, like me, he was a lefty. In the great home-run derby of 1961, I favored Roger Maris over Mickey Mantle because Maris was shy—like me, and unlike the irrepressibly popular Mantle. I had a special feeling for Elston Howard because he was "colored" and my parents had made clear how tough that was in America. I liked Ryne Duren ("Blind Ryne"), the relief pitcher who wore thick glasses as I did. I knew that the outfielder Enos "Country" Slaughter was the oldest man on the team, but didn't know that, while playing for the St. Louis Cardinals, he had earned his nickname by dashing all the way home from first base to beat the Red Sox during the 1946 World Series.

As a child, I played ball most days before shuttling upstairs to do my homework. Rarely, if ever, did I escape an anxious warning from my maternal grandmother: "Don't get overheated." Did Sandy Koufax, that righteous non-Yankee, have to put up with similar warnings at home? But I turned out to be a pretty good and very determined player, batting lefty, throwing lefty, and alternating positions among the pitcher's mound, first base, and the outfield. A good catch, a skillful pitch, or a clutch hit went a long way in my friends' eyes to make up for my being a "good boy," quiet and bookish.

I continued to follow the Yankees even as my family joined the great migration of the 1960's that took us from Brooklyn to Little Neck and then, finally, to Great Neck, the promised land on the north shore of Long Island. Supporting the New York Mets, the team founded in 1962, never even occurred to me. I remained a Yankee fan throughout college and graduate school, and did my best to keep up with the team while in London working on my dissertation. Only in the early 1980's, when its fortunes flagged and I took a teaching job at Arizona State University, did my interest begin to wane.

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"It's warm there, isn't it," my grandmother always said when I called her from Phoenix. She was right. It seemed far too warm to play baseball. I wished the Diamondbacks well when they came to Phoenix in 1998, and I liked the design of Bank One Ballpark, but I was just too puritanical to feel comfortable in a stadium that looked as if its mother were a baseball diamond and its father a shopping mall.

Besides, by the mid-1990's my love of the Yankees revived as a new dynasty arose: Paul O'Neill and Bernie Williams, Joe Girardi and Tino Martinez, Derek Jeter and Mariano Rivera, Scott Brosius and Jorge Posada. I had never been an admirer of Roger Clemens in the days when he pitched for the Red Sox, but once "the Rocket" became *our* rocket, all was forgiven. (Brushing guys off the plate is part of the game, right?) As for the Diamondbacks, I never took them seriously—a mistake, as the 2001 World Series proved when they beat the Yankees in the ninth inning of the last game.

BY THEN, though, I was living in Boston, in the midst of the only other recognized national entity on the American continent. A defining characteristic of Red Sox nation was its pathetic inability to get over the fact that its team, which won five World Series championships from 1903 until 1918, had failed to win a single one thereafter. Its second defining characteristic was hatred of the Yankees. My only comfort, baseball-wise, was the presence of a fair number of other Yankee fans, mostly transplanted New Yorkers like me, and some quieter than others about their loyalties.

Having lived in Cambridge a decade earlier, I knew Boston well when I moved back there in the summer of 2001. I surely knew how detested the Yankees were. On a rainy day during that earlier sojourn, I was walking along Massachusetts Avenue en route to Harvard Yard, wearing my Yankee cap in lieu of an umbrella. Suddenly a man a little younger, a little shorter, and a lot angrier than I crossed the street. "You must have a lot of guts to wear that hat here," he accosted me in an unmistakable Boston accent. "Yeah," I replied, "I do. But I took it off a dead Yankee." "Good for you!" he screamed out jubilantly. "Good for you, man!" And he slapped me on the back.

I could hardly believe what had happened. How crazy were these Sox fans, anyway? And yet, in contrast to the customary tone of life in the environs of Harvard, there was something refreshingly honest, if primitive, in Red Sox Man's reaction to an enemy helmet on his turf. Such proud aggression was a lot more straightforward and less hypocritical than the usual forms of CV-envy, bibliography-anxiety, and let-me-tell-you-about-my-work-disorder that was the rule in Cambridge, where size (of ego as of publications) really does matter.

As I walked into Widener Library, an altogether more serious hat encounter slipped into my mind. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Sigmund Freud recounts an incident told to him as a child by his father Jakob. The elder Freud had gone for a walk one Saturday in the streets of his birthplace when a Gentile came up to him and with a single blow knocked his new fur cap into the mud, shouting, "Jew, get off the pavement!" What did Jakob do? He went into the roadway and picked up his cap. His son, who was about ten or twelve when he heard this story, remembers being dismayed by the "unheroic conduct on the part of this big strong man who was holding the little boy by the hand." He could not help contrasting his father's response to a historical example that "fitted my feelings better: the scene in which Hannibal's father . . . made his boy swear before the household altar to take vengeance on the Romans." Myself, I took no such pledge, but while continuing to wear my Yankee hat when I felt like it, I also redoubled my daily routine at the gym.

Now, some of my best friends are Red Sox fans—really—and I could certainly make my life easier by conforming to the preferences of the "compact majority." But I've never been a when-in-Rome kind of guy. I'm proud of my minority status. When interviewed for my present position at Boston University, I fielded a slew of questions about scholarly things and "vision" things; luckily, no one asked me about baseball. The closest we came was during dinner when Jeff Henderson, a classicist born and bred in New Jersey, averred that he thought it possible to root for both the Yankees and the Red Sox—though not, of course, at the same time. Nothing doing, thought I. Culturally I may be a pluralist, but I come from a long line of stubborn monotheists. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" was one commandment that stuck in my mind. But this was a job interview, so I just smiled and said nothing.

Sports in general are not in particularly good repute in the academy these days. And sports metaphors are basically *verboten* among the ranks of the politically correct. Even among those who secretly believe that "Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing"—and most secretly do—the Vince Lombardi School of Management is in official dis-

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favor. Worse, the trendy field of cultural studies has managed to take the fun out of sports through obscurantist analysis and horrendous writing—surefire paths to making something academically respectable.

Still, there was no mistaking where the loyalties of my Boston friends and colleagues lay, and I was therefore all the more grateful that, by and large, they were able to keep a lid on their indignation when (coming out of the dugout, as it were) I openly declared my Yankee sympathies. In the early days of the 2003 season, I arrived at work one morning to find a YANKEES SUCK poster on my door. I was able to laugh it off because I knew the culprit was a friend—and he knew better than I who had won 26 World Series championships and who had struck out, year in and year out, since 1918.

But 2003 was also a year in which the Sox made it to the playoffs for the American League pennant. Not until late in the seven-game series did it begin to seem possible that they might actually defeat the Yankees, causing feverish expectancy in Boston and corresponding alarm in my household. After the sixth game, my daughters, Alexandra (eight) and Caroline (six), were especially disconsolate. They felt duty-bound, and Daddy-bound, to root for the Yankees and to make no bones about it, but they were taking a lot of flak in school. "I *hope* the Yankees win," Alexandra said with particular intensity as she headed up for bed soon after the final game began. "Win one for the girls," I silently urged—and for my father, who had died two years earlier and who would have loved to be watching the game with his granddaughters.

It certainly didn't seem my wish was going to come true in the early innings, as the Red Sox opened up a 4-0 lead. But then came the bottom of the eighth, when hapless Grady Little, the Boston manager, inadvertently joined the long list of Red Sox martyrs who let balls slip through their legs and games slip through their fingers. He allowed his pitcher, Pedro Martinez, to keep going past his optimal limit of about 100 pitches. Neither Grady nor Pedro could keep the Yanks' Hideki Matsui from slapping a double into left field or Jorge Posada from dropping a bloop single into right. Tie score and extra innings.

The game was bound to end with a dramatic home run, but whose? New York's Aaron Boone ended the speculation, and the series, with a "towering shot," as we used to say, off the Boston relief pitcher Tim Wakefield. It landed fair in the left-field grandstands. Game over, Yankees win 5-4.

The homer hardly could have made me happier if I had hit it myself. Even so, I confess to feeling sorry for Wakefield, who walked off the mound with his head down and sat for a while in the visitors' dugout. He and the Red Sox had been beaten again—beaten by a stray knuckleball, beaten by a great swing, and beaten by an assist from the unflappable ghosts of the Yankee past who sometimes come out in October.

Driving into the office the next morning, weary but ecstatic, I couldn't resist listening to Boston sports radio. It was only then that I began to appreciate the full extent of bitter anger that Grady Little had unleashed and the depth of disappointment felt by Red Sox nation. I thought of one of my favorite poems, W.H. Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts": "About suffering they were never wrong,/The Old Masters; how well they understood/Its human position; how it takes place/While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along." This time, however, Auden was off the mark. For Red Sox nation, the disaster had not taken place at the edge of a wood or in a corner. The "dreadful martyrdom" had been played out in front of millions of despairing spectators.

When I arrived at Bay State Road, I went straight up to the office of my friend Jon Roberts, the most ardent Red Sox fan I know. Grace under pressure and humility in victory have always struck me as admirable guidelines, though I've often fallen short of displaying them. I commiserated as best I could. "Two very evenly matched teams," I said. "The Sox were great." "Could have gone either way." "Terrific game." I said it, and I meant it. "Thanks for being so gracious," he replied. All was right in the world.

LAST YEAR was different. Before the 2004 playoffs began I was already fearful that this time the Sox would win. But as the Yankees hammered the pitcher Curt Schilling (a former Arizona Diamondback), I gained confidence. I watched the start of the second game with Caroline, now all of seven. Both she and Alexandra remembered Pedro Martinez from last year. "Who's your Daddy? Who's your Daddy?" The roar from the Yankee Stadium crowd made little sense to Caroline, who takes questions of paternity seriously, until I explained what Pedro had said about tipping his hat to the Yankees and calling them his Daddy. Then she too joined in the chant as she danced in front of the television set.

Soon afterward, my wife came home from her weekly yoga class. Laura is a regular Jane Austen heroine, but she has one major fault: she doesn't like baseball, in part because she grew up in Eng-

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land and in part because she has too much else to do in life. "It's the most literary of sports," I insisted, but Laura can spot and splatter a rationalization at 50 paces. So I dutifully switched from game two to the second round of Bush *v.* Kerry, sneakily listening to the play-by-play on a newly purchased radio with discreet earphones.

The radio came in handy again the next evening when I took the girls to their karate class. I had brought along a briefcase full of books, but I wasn't in the mood to take notes. As my daughters and their compatriots happily rehearsed the "74 motions," I tuned to sports radio. The talk-show hosts were ripping into Boston's mayor, Thomas Menino, and assorted local clergy for having publicly asked God for a Red Sox victory in the World Series. "It's been 86 years, Lord. . . ." What was next, animal sacrifice on Revere Beach?

The prayers failed to stop the Yankees from shellacking the Red Sox 19-8 in game three, a Saturday-night massacre. I watched the next game, which took place in New York, with my mother, in the chair where my father would have sat if he were still alive. In the ninth inning, only three outs away from a four-game sweep, the Yankees let the Red Sox off the hook and lost the game. Suddenly I became worried, and did what any other grown man would do: I looked to my mother for reassurance. "They're not going to blow the series, are they?" "Of course not," she calmly replied.

Indeed: how could the Yankees, still ahead of Boston by three games to one, go on to lose four post-season games in a row? All too easily, as it happened. By about 11 p.m. on Tuesday, the series was tied three to three and the final game was in the offing.

"Is there really a curse, Daddy?" Alexandra asked as we sat down to watch. It was my turn to be reasonable. "There's no such thing as a curse, girls. But if you believe there's a curse, you may act as if there really is a curse." Naturally they demanded clarification, and I tried again, to somewhat better effect. By the end of the second inning, though, the distinction became irrelevant; the Red Sox were leading 6-0. "Girls, the game's not over yet, but I don't think we're going to win this one. The Yankees are a great team, but even great teams sometimes lose." Small consolation. Angry and frustrated, Caroline said, "I want to beat every one of those Red Sox—now." Her big sister added, sadly: "I'm depressed." So was I. The children went up to bed after telling me how sorry they were. When Laura came home she added her own words of consolation.

The only hopeful moments took place in the seventh inning when the Sox manager brought in Pedro Martinez (who else?) to relieve Derek Lowe, who had pitched brilliantly. Why Pedro? Repetition compulsion? A death wish? Who knows? The result, heart-lifting for me, was a double from (again) Matsui and a single from Williams. But this time Pedro got out of the inning, and then the Sox second baseman Mark Bellhorn put the Yankees out of contention with a two-run homer that for a moment felt like the end of everything. Final score: Red Sox 10, Yankees 3. Series result: Red Sox 4, Yankees 3. Red Sox to the World Series and the Yankees to therapy, with me shortly to follow.

I couldn't bring myself to watch the Red Sox celebrate or listen to the post-game analysis. Argos, our labrador, needed to go out and so did I. As we walked along Centre Street we heard car horns beeping and Boston College students partying. I went to sleep very late, wondering what had gone wrong. The next morning Alexandra came bounding into our bedroom as she had done after every game. "Who won?" (No scores on bedside tables in our house.) "The Red Sox," I told her. "They played very well and we just didn't manage to beat them." Caroline shook her head. "Kids are really going to get in my face today." Before sitting down to work I sent Jon Roberts a congratulatory e-mail. He was as generous as he had been the previous year, but a lot happier. "Either team could have won," he wrote. "They're just so evenly matched."

True. But somebody always loses, and I had come to the unsurprising realization that I really hated being that somebody. "Show me a good loser," as Coach Lombardi said, "and I'll show you a loser."

As THE World Series got under way, the signs declaring BELIEVE were unavoidable. Friends canceled our Saturday-night dinner date to attend the first game—and who could blame them? By then, Laura had to acknowledge that I wasn't the only person in America watching baseball. Even her yoga teacher turned out to be a devoted Sox fan.

So was our rabbi, a native New Yorker and a relatively new addition to Red Sox nation (in other words, a convert). On Sunday, I took the girls to religious school and stayed for "Family Connection," where parents study themes and texts in tandem with their children. Faced with the task of explicating Martin Buber, the rabbi started the session by invoking Boston's Curt Schilling. Earlier, a pupil had asked whether there was something "talmudic" in the question Schilling had posed at the

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start of the 2004 post-game season: "Why not us?" (Schilling's motto is now available on a T-shirt at fine stores near you—if you happen to live in metropolitan Boston.) After game six of the playoffs, won by the Sox, Schilling also announced that, as a believing Christian, he prayed to God before the start of play for the strength to do his best.

Nietzsche was wrong: God isn't dead, He's just very busy during sports season, offering encouragement to, and receiving thanks from, hordes of professional athletes. But Schilling, to give him credit, did not pray for a win; he prayed for the means to do his best and to endure the pain that might be in store for him. It's hard to fault his heartfelt words, uttered quietly after a courageous and skillful outing.

As for Schilling's question, was it in fact talmudic (whatever might have been meant by that term)? You don't have to be Jewish to feel beleaguered and persecuted, or to believe that your time has come. In class, I suggested that Red Sox nation's emphasis on keeping the faith might owe less to the Talmud than to the strength and character of Boston Catholicism. As it is written on Argos's huge green food bowl: "Every dog has its day." If so, why not the faithful servants of Red Sox nation, who had wandered from stadium to stadium in search of a championship for more than twice as long as the Israelites wandered in the desert?

The appeal of sports, in any case, is ultimately ecumenical, a form of instant, if passing, affiliation, open to everyone. If you have the money you can buy a ticket, and if you don't you can still show the spirit. Thus the notice that came home from my children's elementary school: "Red Sox Spirit Day," it was headed. "Tomorrow is declared Red Sox spirit day. Show your support for our hometown team by wearing Red Sox clothing and caps of Red, White, and Blue. Go Sox. Go Sox."

I didn't want to be a Yankee Scrooge, but I did feel a bit put out. Minority rights, anyone? To be sure, the school, Mason Rice, is an enlightened place, full of hard-working teachers and parents a little too convinced that their children are geniuses. At the start of the ALCS series, the principal had made it clear that children had the right to support whichever team they deemed fit, and my daughters came home smiling and grateful for their adored Mr. Springer's considerateness.

But Red Sox Spirit Day was hard on Alexandra and Caroline, prematurely principled girls who love their school but wanted to support the Yankees and their Daddy, too. "It's unfair," they had pointed out the night before. "Don't they know that not everyone is a Sox fan?" "Do what you want," I replied. "If you're more comfortable wearing red to school, wear red. It really doesn't matter." But my heart wasn't in my words.

In the morning the girls came to see me after they were dressed. Caroline was wearing all blue, the color of defiance. "It's still baseball, Daddy," she declared, "but it's Yankee baseball, not Red Sox baseball." Alexandra sheepishly appeared in the color of affiliation, a red T-shirt emblazoned with a salamander. She felt guilty and so, immediately, did I. "Daddy, I can't decide if I should wear this shirt or not. It's hard to be the only one who's different." That's for sure; but this was not the moment to lecture her about the evils of peer pressure. It was my job to tell her that she looked great, that the color of her shirt didn't matter, and that I wasn't even a little disappointed by her choice. She came to a compromise on her own: "I'll always root for the Yankees against the Red Sox, but if the Red Sox win, can I root for them?" Later she added: "Even though I'm still a Yankees fan, I want to cheer my friends on." Sure, I said, trying hard to sound convincing. Why not us?

"The enemy of my enemy is my friend." Do I really believe that? If so, I should have been rooting for the St. Louis Cardinals, the National League champions, to win the World Series. I couldn't quite bring myself to do that, but I wasn't about to cheer for the Sox, either. And yet it was hard to begrudge them the victory over the Yankees that they had just worked so hard for.

The Yankee manager Joe Torre, asked how he felt about losing to Boston, had naturally confessed to disappointment. But he also knew how much the Red Sox success meant to Tim Wakefield, who had given up the winning home run to Aaron Boone in the previous year's seventh game. "There are two sides to the story," he said. It was one of the first big lessons my parents had taught me.

On Wednesday, October 27, with the Red Sox ahead by three games to none over the Cardinals, I attended the final day of a conference at my university commemorating 350 years of Jewish life in America.

Inevitably the subject of baseball came up in conversation; well, I brought it up with several of the participants. Of the Americanist Leonard Dinnerstein, whom I had known in Arizona, I asked: "*You're* a Yankee fan, aren't you?" "No," replied Dinnerstein, a Bronx native, "I'm a contrarian, and I've been a Red Sox fan since 1946." Even contrarians occasionally need hats, it seems.

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But was baseball good for the Jews? That was an issue impossible to ignore at a conference that considered whether the Jewish experience in America was fundamentally different from its European counterpart. The answer turns out to be: not always. As the baseball writer Glenn Stout has shown, the "curse of the Bambino" had an anti-Semitic subtext. Harry Frazee, the New York showman who owned the Sox and sold the Babe to the Yankees, was vilified not only for doing what he did but also for what he allegedly was: a Jew. On September 10, 1921, Henry Ford's house organ, the *Dearborn Independent*, suggested that the Sox had been "placed under the smothering influence of the 'chosen race.'" The sportswriter Fred Lieb described Frazee as "an evil genie," another heinous anti-Jewish stereotype.

What sort of Jew was Harry Frazee? No sort at all. He was a Presbyterian of Scotch-Irish extraction. For that matter, the "curse of the Bambino" was itself a later invention, thought up by imaginative sportswriters (probably New Yorkers) in the mid-1980's. Until then, the Sox had just lost on their own steam, or lack thereof. Which is hardly to gainsay the grateful eagerness of Red Sox nation in seizing upon the idea of a curse, which expresses resentment of one's fate while neatly disclaiming responsibility for it.

That night, the night of a lunar eclipse no less, the long-eclipsed Red Sox awoke from the nightmare of their history. The game took place at Busch stadium in St. Louis. A lead-off homer by Johnny Damon in the first inning, just to show the Sox meant business, was followed by a double by Trot Nixon to drive two more runs home. By the ninth inning, I was rooting for the Cardinals. "Do something, guys. Don't let the Red Sox sweep you!" But when Boston's Keith Foulke picked up a short hopper to the mound and scurried over toward first for the final out, the game was over—and so was the curse.

IN TRUTH, the Red Sox victory was more of a testimonial to the power of pitching than to the power of prayer. But it did answer the prayers of those who had asked, with Curt Schilling, why not us? Somewhat to my surprise, I was (momentarily) happy for my friends and neighbors who had longed for redemption, as I was for the players who had made it happen. Babe Ruth finally had the night off. Chalk one up for Red Sox nation, past and present, for the great ones like Ted Williams and Dom DiMaggio who are gone, and for those like Johnny Pesky and Carl Yastrzemski who lived long enough to see the curse undone.

I won't ever be a member of Red Sox nation, and I wouldn't have it any other way. When it comes to baseball, I'm content to remain a stranger in a strange land. And I also feel professionally constrained to point out that we have not exactly reached history's terminal point. "All empires end," announced Red Sox CEO Larry Lucchino after the Yankees' defeat. But empires strike back, and dynasties return to life. Losing one ALCS to the Red Sox won't destroy the Yankees, and I can live with a Red Sox world championship every 86 years or so.

So I am looking forward to the first Boston home game this month, when Red Sox nation troops back to its baseball heaven. As the championship flag is raised in Fenway Park for the first time since 1918, the Yankees will be in the opposing dugout and their pitcher Randy Johnson, the Big Unit with the Big Left Arm and the Big Salary, may be on the mound. April isn't the cruelest month, after all. Whatever their respective problems, my home town and my adopted town remain places where we can still pursue our own American dreams with varying degrees of passion and success, on and off the green fields where, win or lose, the boys of summer play, sometimes into extra innings, and the rest of us enjoy the freedom to worship, or not to worship, as we choose.

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MUSIC

Singing the Classical-Music Blues

Terry Teachout

CLASSICAL MUSIC in America is in an increasingly tight corner. Though many established performing groups continue to draw respectable crowds, most are finding it harder to do so, and even still-popular ensembles like the New York Philharmonic are watching their subscribers grow grayer by the year. The mainstream media long ago lost interest in classical artists. Classical radio stations are fast becoming a thing of the past, and the major classical-record labels are in terminal decline.

Beyond this, everyone involved with the creation and marketing of classical music recognizes that its place in postmodern American culture is marginal at best. The minimalist composer John Adams, perhaps the most successful American classical composer of his generation, summed up the situation in an interview with the *London Times*:

> In our street we have friends with lots in common. We discuss new books, films, popular culture, politics—everything except serious music. That shuts everyone up. I don't think they even know what I do.

How did this unhappy state of affairs come to pass? In *Classical Music in America: A History of Its Rise and Fall*, Joseph Horowitz, a critic and historian who doubles as an arts administrator, has turned to the confident past in an attempt to explain the uncomfortable present.[1] Like his previous books about the culture of American classical music, this one is both descriptive and prescriptive, history with a moral.

According to Horowitz, classical music in the U.S. is a 19th-century European transplant with shallow roots, a "potted hothouse product" that is "more about the New York Philharmonic than [about] Charles Ives, more about the Metropolitan Opera than [about] Aaron Copland." Furthermore, he believes it has "largely run its course," and that its existing institutions will either transform themselves or be superseded by "post-classical" organizations "stressing contemporary repertoire and regularly embracing popular and vernacular genres."

History with a moral is by definition suspect. But Horowitz, for all the enthusiasm with which he espouses his various musical causes, is for the most part an impressively fair-minded historian who takes care to avoid superimposing contemporary agendas on past events. One need not always agree with his interpretations of those events in order to profit from his account of how European classical music took hold in a new world with sharply different cultural priorities—as well as from his speculations regarding its prospects of survival in the 21st century.

TERRY TEACHOUT, COMMENTARY's *regular music critic and the drama critic of the* Wall Street Journal, *also writes about the arts at www.terryteachout.com. His latest book is* All in the Dances: A Brief Life of George Balanchine *(Harcourt). He is a member of the National Council on the Arts.*

[1] Norton, 606 pp., $39.95. In addition to writing *Understanding Toscanini: How He Became an American Culture-God and Helped Create a New Audience for Old Music* (1987), *The Ivory Trade: Music and the Business of Music at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition* (1990), and *Wagner Nights: An American History* (1994), Horowitz has served as artistic adviser to New York's 92nd Street Y, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and other organizations.

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CLASSICAL MUSIC was slow to put down lasting institutional roots in the U.S. The New York Philharmonic, America's oldest orchestra, was founded in 1842 as a kind of musicians' club, and did not start admitting "strangers" to its performances until 1851. The Boston Symphony began giving concerts three decades after that, and the original Metropolitan Opera House was not built until 1883.

By the 1890's, classical-music activity in New York, Boston, and several other major American cities had become both widespread and intense. Most of it was Austro-German in origin and orientation, though a number of American-born composers, including Amy Beach, George Chadwick, Arthur Foote, Edward MacDowell, John Knowles Paine, and Horatio Parker, were producing large-scale works of substance—virtually all of them, however, based more or less slavishly on European models.

It is revealing that the most enduringly popular piece of classical music to be premiered in 19th-century America was composed by a European. Anton Dvořák's Ninth Symphony (1893), subtitled *From the New World*, contained thematic material derived from black spirituals—for which it was roundly criticized by American composers who regarded such vernacular borrowings as unserious almost by definition.[2] As Paine declared:

> It is not a question of nationality, but individuality, and individuality of style is not the result of imitation—whether of folk songs, Negro melodies, the tunes of the heathen Chinese or Digger Indians—but of personal character and inborn originality.

Dvořák thought otherwise. "In the Negro melodies of America," he declared, "I discover all that is needed for a great and noble school of music." Whether or not he was right, the *New World* Symphony proved to be a masterpiece that entered the standard repertoire immediately. By contrast, the American-born composers of his day, for all their determination not to compromise their "inborn originality," managed between them to produce only one piece, MacDowell's D Minor Piano Concerto (1889), that continues to be performed with anything like regularity. The rest of their output is forgotten, not because its craft was defective but because its substance was too derivative to be memorable.

In the absence of a uniquely American school of composition, classical music in the U.S. evolved along lines strikingly different from those prevalent in Europe at the end of the 19th century. As Horowitz explains:

> More than Europeans, Americans have worshipped musical masterpieces and deified their exponents. . . . America's musical high culture has at all times (alas) been less about music composed by Americans than about American concerts of music composed by Europeans. Preponderantly, peculiarly, it is a culture of *performance*. [emphasis added]

This culture deserves its due. It was serious to the highest degree, and it would produce some of the finest and most distinctive music-making of the 20th century. But it was flawed by its uncreative conservatism, and in time that flaw would prove mortal.

NOT UNTIL the 1920's did the U.S. begin to produce native-born classical composers of significance who worked in a recognizably American-sounding idiom.[3] All of them, starting with Aaron Copland, studied with French or Italian teachers and broke with the Austro-German musical tradition early in their careers—a break made easier by anti-German public sentiment arising from World War I. "After 1915," Horowitz writes, "German composers, Wagner included, were downplayed or banned. Of the composers listed on Boston Symphony programs, the proportion from German or Hapsburg lands dropped from 62 percent in 1916-17 to 29.7 percent in 1918-19."

But by then the culture of performance was too firmly entrenched to allow Copland, Samuel Barber, Roy Harris, Virgil Thomson, and other American composers of the 20's and 30's to become fully integrated into American musical life (though Copland and Barber came close). Instead, they were overshadowed by the celebrity performers who continued to dominate the classical-music scene. As it happened, most of these performers were themselves European émigrés. Although a few of them, including the conductors Serge Koussevitzky of the Boston Symphony and Leopold Stokowski of the Philadelphia Orchestra, were interested in American music, the rest had comparatively little interest in *any* new music, American or otherwise.[4]

For Horowitz, the emblematic figure of this period is the conductor Arturo Toscanini, who spent the latter part of his career leading two New York-based ensembles, the New York Philharmonic and the NBC Symphony. Like Stokowski, Toscanini became a media idol, but

[2] The New Orleans-born pianist-composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869) had already produced a series of strikingly vivid piano miniatures, including *Bamboula* (1849) and *Le banjo* (1850), that were based on the vernacular music he had heard as a boy. These pieces were forgotten after his death, though, and would not be revived until well into the 20th century.

[3] Charles Ives (1874-1954) predated these composers, but it was not until the 40's that his proto-modern music (most of it composed prior to 1918) began to be performed publicly. The extraordinarily gifted Charles T. Griffes (1884-1920), who repudiated his German training in 1911 to embrace the new musical language of Scriabin and the French impressionists, died too young to leave behind more than a handful of mature works.

[4] This also explains why opera in English never became common in the U.S. (as opposed to Europe, where most operas were performed in vernacular translation well into the 20th century).

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though he played some modern music, including a handful of American pieces, he was (in Horowitz's words) "the first conductor of international consequence fundamentally to divorce himself from the music of his own time."

It was Toscanini's example that would be followed by most conductors of the 30's and after. Under their leadership, American orchestras became musical museums that were "preponderantly curatorial . . . disproportionately dedicated to masterpieces of the past." The resulting stalemate was eloquently summed up by Copland in 1941:

> Very often I get the impression that audiences seem to think that the endless repetition of a small body of entrenched masterworks is all that is required for a ripe musical culture. . . . [W]hen they are used, unwittingly perhaps, to stifle contemporary effort in our own country, then I am almost tempted to stake the most extreme view and say that we should be better off without them!

Not until the 50's did American-trained performers like Leonard Bernstein, Van Cliburn, and Isaac Stern begin to make an impression on audiences. Of these artists, only Bernstein, himself a composer of distinction, was deeply committed to the performance of new music, American and otherwise, performing it brilliantly and frequently with the New York Philharmonic, of which he became the first American-born music director in 1958.[5]

Unfortunately, the rising generation of American composers, Milton Babbitt and Elliott Carter foremost among them, had by then taken a drastically wrong turn. "Sustained," as Horowitz writes, "by a lifeline to the universities, shunning tonality as history's detritus, lacking a constituency beyond themselves," these composers "produced an undistinguished species of hermetic art." Not surprisingly, performers shunned their music as completely as did audiences, thus causing the culture of performance to become still more deeply entrenched in America.

As for Bernstein, he abandoned the Philharmonic in 1969 and spent the rest of his life working primarily in Europe. There, his role as an invigorating spokesman for American music long behind him, he devoted himself to conducting increasingly self-indulgent performances of the Austro-German classics.

Since then, classical music in the U.S. has grown steadily more marginalized, to the point where Horowitz can describe it without exaggeration as "the American performing art most divorced from contemporary creativity."

This is not to say that his account of how it got that way is altogether free of exaggerations and idiosyncrasies. For one thing, he has chosen to deemphasize the real achievements of American composers, ostensibly because he sees the story of classical music in America as dominated by performers and other figures. Reasonable though this may be, it also seems possible that Horowitz's own Austro-German sensibility has dulled his response to other modes of expression. Just as he disdains the "lean, taut, accurate, 'objective'" style of American performing artists, so he is oddly unresponsive to the music of Aaron Copland, the greatest and most characteristic of American composers. Of Copland he unfairly writes:

> As a concert composer, he quite obviously does not command the scope and resonance of his sometime-model Stravinsky. As a political composer, he lacks the needling indignation of Kurt Weill. As a heroic patriot, he sounds strained alongside Shostakovich. As a folklorist, his borrowings are thin and synthetic judged by Bartók's. His aesthetic foundation, stressing plainness and economy, was stretched to the limit by the creative tasks he assayed. His American vision, while potent, is not protean; it lacks Ives's mysteries.

In general, though, *Classical Music in America* proves to be a reliable and thought-provoking chronicle of the emergence of what might be called the American way of music-making. Horowitz's greatest strength is his wide-ranging frame of cultural reference, especially with regard to the 19th and early 20th centuries. He has looked closely and discriminatingly at the voluminous writings of the critics of the period, as well as at fictional portrayals by such acute social observers as Willa Cather and Edith Wharton. He writes about the music of now-obscure composers with properly judicious enthusiasm, placing their achievements in historical context and never praising them to inappropriate excess.[6]

More problematic, perhaps inevitably so, is Horowitz's attempt to sketch the outlines of a possible "post-classical music of the future . . . a more intellectually adventurous, less ghettoized classical-music experience." He is, I think, correct to cite the concert music of George Gershwin as one possible prototype for post-classical composers, but mistakenly inclined to overrate Gershwin at the expense of Copland and the other American classicists of the 30's and 40's. Horowitz similarly overrates the music of John Adams and his fellow minimalist Steve Reich, albeit in terms that suggest unspoken reservations about its lack of substance ("Adams's musical vocabulary seems precariously limited for a full-length narrative

[5] William Kapell, the greatest American pianist of his generation, died in an airplane crash in 1953 at the age of thirty-one, just as he was beginning to program American music with some regularity.

[6] In particular, Horowitz's assessment of Amy Beach (1867-1944), whose interesting but ultimately provincial music has been praised far beyond its due by feminist musicologists, is a model of sympathetic balance.

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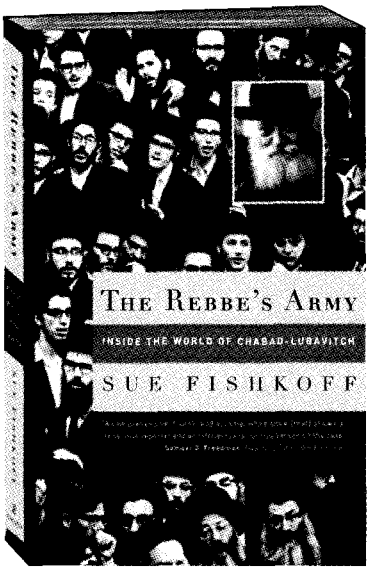

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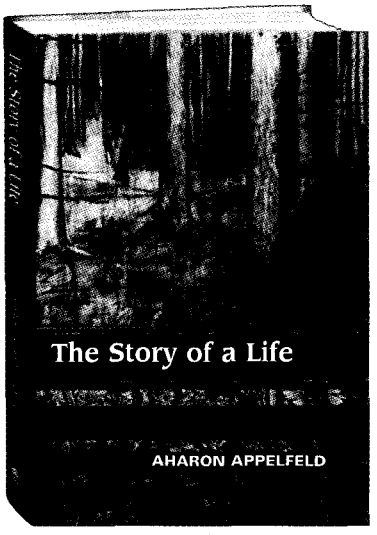

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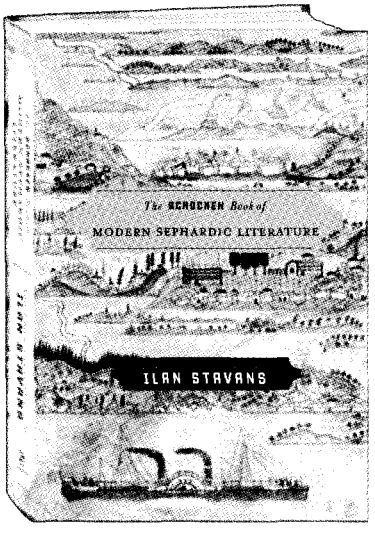

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opera . . . his abstract music can suffer from a paucity of information"). Nor does he appear to be aware of the work of such "new tonalists" as Lowell Liebermann, Paul Moravec, and George Tsontakis, whose challenging yet accessible music represents the most significant alternative to minimalism that has emerged to date.[7]

All this notwithstanding, Horowitz is to be lauded for his persuasive effort both to chronicle and to account for the drastic decline of American classical music. This is a problem about which I have been writing for a decade, and I can do no better here than to repeat my warning of seven years ago that the time has come for "soloists and orchestras to rethink the way they do business":

> If they do not, the concert hall will someday become a place where old men and women gather forlornly to listen to the same symphonies and concertos they first heard a half-century ago, while their children, if they are interested in classical music at all, will stay home and listen to compact discs or whatever newer marvel is destined to replace them.[8]

Anyone seeking to understand why American classical music has come to so dead an end—and wondering how it might yet escape a final descent into cultural irrelevance—should read Joseph Horowitz's *Classical Music in America* with close attention. It is a fine place to begin, if not to end, a long-overdue discussion.

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[7] I first wrote about these composers in "The New Tonalists" (COMMENTARY, December 1997), reprinted as "The New New Music" in *A Terry Teachout Reader* (Yale).

[8] "The Death of the Concert" (COMMENTARY, December 1998), also reprinted in *A Terry Teachout Reader*.

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Books in Review

Bowing to Islam?

Eurabia:
The Euro-Arab Axis
by Bat Ye'or
Fairleigh Dickinson. 384 pp. $49.50

Reviewed by
David Warren

FOR THE past 30 years, the Jewish scholar Bat Ye'or, born in Egypt but long resident in Geneva, has been developing formidable credentials as a chronicler of "dhimmitude," a term with which she is closely associated. Constructed from the Arabic *dhimmi*, the word characterizes the submissive status of peoples conquered by Islam but allowed to live. Sometimes at the edges and sometimes in the face of an academic world that has become increasingly politically correct, Bat Ye'or (a Hebrew pen name meaning "daughter of the Nile") has been challenging myths about the history of Islamic civilization by examining the actual record of Islam's encounters with Christianity and Judaism in the West, Hinduism and other religions in the East.

Most of Bat Ye'or's writing career has been conducted in French. It began with *Les Juifs en Egypte* (1971), a comprehensive study of the historical fate of the Jews in Egypt. *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians Under Islam*, published in 1985 and still in print in several languages, was an expansion and enlargement of an original French study of the oppression, reduction, and, in many cases, destruction of European societies that fell under Muslim conquest. *The Decline of Eastern Christianity Under Islam* (1996) shows the same systematic process at work in the Ottoman empire.

It is worth underlining the word "systematic." Bat Ye'or has made it her business to document the similarity in the modes employed from one cultural location to another, especially the peculiar "ratcheting method" by which, over time, a subject group is pressured to convert to Islam—in order to escape oppressive taxation, dispossession, enslavement, or periodic massacre. What makes her writings the bolder is her insistence—she is hardly shy about quoting or citing references to the Qur'an and *hadiths*—that the oppression of minorities under Islam is not a product of historical accident and circumstances. Indeed, she argues, sometimes with stridency, it is intrinsic to the religion, which everywhere insists not only upon the subjugation of all non-Islamic peoples but upon their humiliation.

Although seldom in direct conflict with the facts provided by most mainstream histories, hers is a radically different account, focusing on conditions that more conventional (or politic) historians pass over lightly. In particular, Bat Ye'or explodes the myth of "al-Andalus"—the supposedly glorious civilization of medieval Islamic Spain in which Muslim, Jewish, and Christian poets, artists, scholars, and philosophers flourished in a kind of fraternal paradise of multiculturalism. In the case of Jews and Christians alike, according to Bat Ye'or, life in Muslim Spain was in fact made livable only for those who could materially advance

DAVID WARREN, *a columnist and commentator on international affairs for the* Ottawa Citizen, *reviewed Gilles Kepel's* The War for Muslim Minds *in our February issue.*

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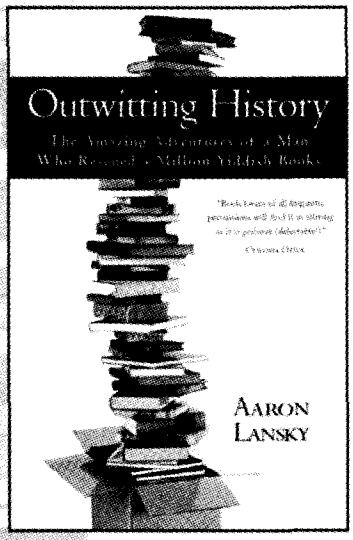

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the interests of rulers, which is to say the expansion of Islam.

As in Spain, so it was in North Africa and the Near East, where, in Bat Ye'or's telling, the ratcheting principle patiently and progressively eliminated evidence that these areas had ever been Byzantine and Christian. And just as Christian civilization was scraped from the ground of North Africa, so, too, was Zoroastrianism progressively vaporized in what is now Iran, and the once resplendent Buddhist cultures in Afghanistan and Central Asia utterly annihilated. By the time the British lifted Islamic rule from India, Bat Ye'or writes, there was little left even of the ruins of its long Hindu past; although the majority of the inhabitants remained outwardly Hindu, they had been reduced to poverty, illiteracy, dependency, and spiritual defeatism through centuries under "the Islamic lash."

ACCORDING TO Bat Ye'or's new book, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis*, the same fate now lies in store for modern Europe. Her thesis has been made topical by Bernard Lewis's casual remark to a German newspaper last summer that, if present trends continue, "Europe will be Islamic by the end of this century at the latest." Lewis's thought—or warning—has reverberated in European discussion ever since.

The argument of *Eurabia* is that a *formal* structure to accommodate the transfer of Europe to Islamic rule began to be assembled long ago. The impetus came during the first OPEC oil embargo in 1973-4, but the process really began to take off with the second embargo of 1979. Soon thereafter it assumed the form of a specific bureaucratic initiative: the "Euro-Arab Dialogue," an official program of the European Union. This long-running project has left an immense paper trail, which Bat Ye'or expounds throughout the length of her new book.

On the face of it, the claim she makes is astounding: namely, that the "Euro-Arab Dialogue," has by now evolved and been institutionalized to the point of becoming the tail wagging the European dog. But Bat Ye'or has devoted years of tedious labor to assembling the mountain of documents and transcripts that sustain this claim. She lays out her thesis twice: first in a continuous narrative, interrupted by passages of deep historical background, and then in a series of appendixes and notes that provide the key policy documents issued by the various summits and conferences of the "Euro-Arab Dialogue," as well as texts touching upon it from outside sources.

In the early 1970's, when the "dialogue" began, Europe was quite literally over a barrel, its economies entirely dependent on oil overwhelmingly of Middle Eastern origin. The Arab success in creating and wielding the OPEC weapon was sufficient to bring Europe to its knees, even before fresh waves of Muslim immigration made the accommodation of Islamic political and cultural demands into a European domestic necessity.

From the beginning, Bat Ye'or shows, the Arabs tossed the existence of Israel onto the table. The essential condition for Arab participation in the dialogue was for Europe to recognize the "legitimate grievances" of the Palestinian people, pledge itself to the creation of a Palestinian state, and acknowledge Yasir Arafat's PLO as the sole representative of Palestinian aspirations. It is thus no coincidence, according to Bat Ye'or, that, around the same time, Europe's former sympathies with a beleaguered Israel began to evaporate.

Along with this came a common Euro-Arab stance against the United States, Israel's chief defender. Anti-Americanism, more and more explicit, was written into the structure of European policy, gaining momentum with the collapse of the Soviet empire when Europe found itself suddenly freed of the necessity of U.S. military protection. Anti-Israel and anti-American sentiment also benefited from Charles de Gaulle's

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grand strategic vision of the late 1960's, according to which France would assume a leading role both within Europe and as the head of an emerging Mediterranean bloc including Algeria and the other newly independent North African states. The result would be a unified Franco-Arab front capable of mounting an effective challenge to Anglo-American cultural, political, and economic hegemony.

Of course, de Gaulle was a paternalist, not a supplicant. He envisioned Arabs speaking French, not Frenchmen speaking Arabic. In the hands of his successors, however, the French dream has been incrementally inverted; from leading the advance of continental power, France now leads the retreat. But the retreat itself, Bat Ye'or shows, is continent-wide.

The mushrooming growth of Muslim immigrant communities in Europe has pushed cultural issues increasingly to the fore and contributed to a ratcheting effect of its own. As Muslim demands increase, whether for the teaching of Arabic in European schools and universities or for the right to proselytize for Islam in these same venues, European authorities have more often complied than not. Just as the myth of medieval Andalusia is pushed as a "positive" model for Euro-Arab interaction—already signifying, Bat Ye'or points out, a surrender to the Muslim view of the relationship—a counter-myth of the Crusades is held up as the embodiment of European rapacity and imperialism, yet to be lived down or compensated for.

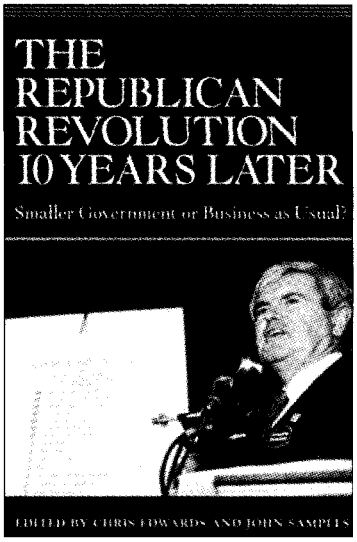
All this plays into modern Europe's strange, cringing psychic need for abasement after the self-inflicted carnage of two world wars. Along with Europe's collapsing birth rate, other signs of a culture hollowing out from within are the decay of institutional Christianity and Europe's abandonment of its own historical identity and mission, including its centuries-long rivalry with Islam. The multiculturalist ethos acquiesces in demands for the removal of Christian symbols from the public square, while permitting the proliferation of Islamic ones.

In what I found the most interesting chapter of the book, Bat Ye'or examines the Islamization of what remains of institutional Christianity in Europe, especially in the Protestant mainstream. There are a dozen pregnant pages here on "Christianity's flight to Marcionism," named after the 2nd-century gnostic heretic who taught that Christianity was a gospel of love to the absolute exclusion of law, and who discarded the Hebrew Bible in toto. This plays smoothly into what she calls the new "Palestinian theology": the contemporary Islamic view that the oppressed Palestinian people have, by "perverse imitation," replaced the historical Jews as the rightful inheritors of the Holy Land. As Bat Ye'or sees it, although traditional Catholics still grasp that Islam is a threat to the West, post-modern Protestants have already been adapting themselves to the condition of dhimmitude.

In short, if a "dialogue" implies some meeting of minds, what Bat Ye'or presents us with is a one-way dictation. The documents generated by the huge bureaucracy in aid of the "Euro-Arab Dialogue" may be couched in the language of "mutual benefits," but the reality, as she sees it, is that for three decades Europe has done nothing but concede, and the Arabs have done nothing but accept the concessions.

As a book to read, *Eurabia* is frankly a slog. It is more like a dossier, with notes. It has been written in English by a person who thinks in French, and whose rhetorical gestures are sometimes rather conspicuously Egyptian. The voice is repetitiously and relentlessly accusatory, and much is taken for granted by way of both information and attitude. By the end, one almost longs for the dry indifference of a conventional academic style.

The Era of Big Government Is Not Over.



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This is not to say that there is anything untruthful in Bat Ye'or's account of things. She is emphasizing a dimension of current reality—the challenge of a resurgent Islam—from which the politically correct try to look away. The flaw lies rather in her partiality (in the sense of incompleteness). If we pull the camera back, we can see that the "Euro-Arab Dialogue" is really a small component of a much vaster Euro-bureaucracy, whose concerns are diverse and multifarious. But Bat Ye'or's camera never pulls back.

In addition, although the "Euro-Arab Dialogue" is demonstrably a part of the structure of modern Europe, and although it has been written into the arrangements of the European Union, it is hard to get one's mind around the shape of it. Much of its operation appears ad-hoc. There is, for instance, no single "appeasement czar" to whom we can look for authoritative pronouncements. There is no discrete building or department to which we can go to collect press releases. It is an affair not of legislation or of discernible political activity but of seminars and conferences and policy meetings and blathering "directives." In the absence of political bricks and mortar, the argument about what the beast is up to and how far it has advanced inevitably develops a paranoid flavor.

One could, in fact, take Bat Ye'or's argument a step farther than she does and still come out at a somewhat different place. At the root of the contest today between Western and Islamic ideas is, after all, a thoroughly discrepant view of "dialogue" itself. In the clash between West and East, not only now but over the last fourteen centuries, Westerners have been studying Islam, and translating the Qur'an, and trying to figure out where the Muslims are coming from ever since the moment of their first encounter over Byzantium's eastern frontier. In radical contrast, orthodox Muslims have been expressly taught that they must not read or hear or absorb Christian or any other external religious arguments, in principle on pain of death. In all this time, the Bible has never once been formally translated into Arabic or (I think) any other Muslim language by a Muslim.

That is a big difference, to put it mildly. President Bush, who for the moment has become the central player in this drama, may know more than he cares to admit about the degree to which he is in fact a Crusader in Afghanistan and Iraq. The democracy he represents is, by its very nature, a frontal assault on orthodox Islam.

There can be no real "dialogue" between these civilizations, only a contest of will. Zarqawi gets it; Osama gets it; Zawahiri gets it. Americans seem to get it, perhaps more instinctively than rationally. Post-modern Europeans cannot get it.

But—and this, too, is missing from Bat Ye'or's narrative, even as a possibility—the story is not over; the surrender has not fully taken place. Even in Europe, the patient is not yet in a true coma, only in a deep and troubled sleep. That he may be fitfully beginning to awake is suggested, for example, by the political convulsions in today's Netherlands. There, longstanding policies of open immigration, multiculturalism, and appeasement of Islamist fanaticism, melding with the de-spiritualization and demoralization of traditional Christian culture, have produced an explosion, symbolized in the brutal murder of Theo van Gogh and its aftermath. Holland is now waking up to a shambles, but what will become of that shambles is as yet unforeseeable.

Other developments, too, suggest grounds for (guarded) hope. Bat Ye'or is right to insist that the issue of the Islamic challenge is the single most important item on the European agenda. But her book may also, just possibly, be overtaken by events—and specifically by the rippling effects of American success in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The recent Iraqi election is triggering deep seismic reactions throughout the Arab and Islamic world. It is not out of the question that we may see a sudden spread of Western secular values and constitutional democratic aspirations throughout a region ossified by generations of authoritarian, mostly military rule. Within Islam itself, there are suddenly two rival currents—Islamism and "democratism." These truly are mortal enemies.

Will the advance of democratic, constitutional, and bourgeois practices and habits transform the Islamic world faster in the direction of the West than Europe is being transformed in the direction of Islam? We shall see. For the present, Bat Ye'or's is a voice crying in the desert that ought to be carefully attended to, even as the desert itself shows fugitive signs of greenery.

Cold Warrior

Lane Kirkland: Champion of American Labor

by Arch Puddington

Wiley. 342 pp. $30.00

Reviewed by
Seth Lipsky

ONE DAY in 1984, when the outcome of the cold war was still in the balance, the phone rang in my office at the *Wall Street Journal/Europe* in Brussels, precipitating an encounter of the kind that changes one's thinking. My caller, an official of the AFL-CIO, was inviting me to meet Lane Kirkland, the trade-union federation's president, in the bar of the Hilton hotel.

Kirkland was in town for a meeting of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, an institution established at the close of

SETH LIPSKY *is the editor of the* New York Sun.

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World War II to vie with the Soviet-backed World Federation of Trade Unions for the leadership of organized labor in Europe. Over drinks, I found Kirkland highly exercised by the Reagan administration's recent decision to permit the Communist regime of General Wojciech Jaruzelski in Poland to rejoin the International Monetary Fund. Instead, as I would report a few days later in the *Journal*, Kirkland advocated the imposition of crippling sanctions on Warsaw, and legal action to force Poland either to pay its foreign debts or to face default.

What I took from this meeting was a remarkable fact: on important elements of cold-war strategy, the leader of the American labor movement, himself a major figure in the Democratic party, stood to the right of . . . Ronald Reagan. In the years that followed, I would have ample occasion to see just how far-reaching was Lane Kirkland's contribution to the American victory over the Soviet Union in the cold war. That contribution is, rightly, a major theme of this new biography by Arch Puddington, director of research at Freedom House, who tells here the story of a pivotal and altogether extraordinary figure in our recent political history.

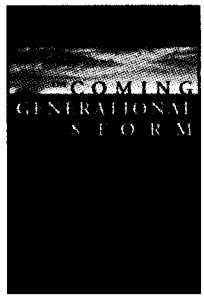
Kirkland was born in 1922 in Camden, South Carolina. Among his ancestors were politicians, judges, planters, industrialists—men, in Puddington's words, "of distinction and mostly wealth." His father was a cotton buyer; in accompanying him on his rounds, young Lane may well have acquired one of his own hallmark traits as an adult: the ability to size people up in short order.

In World War II, Kirkland was at sea with the merchant marine during some of the most terrifying months of German submarine warfare. At war's close, he worked by day in the hydrographic office of the Navy and attended Georgetown University by night. It was there, in 1947, in the midst of the political battle over the Taft-Hartley Act, that he was inspired by an encounter with William Green of the AFL (the merger with the rival CIO was not to occur until 1955) to sign up for a job on the federation's research staff.

From the start, Puddington tells us, Kirkland exhibited a first-class mind and extraordinary rhetorical gifts. He rose swiftly through a succession of posts, including executive assistant to president George Meany in 1960; in 1969, he won election as the AFL-CIO's secretary-treasurer. In this latter position, Kirkland's own personality as a leader began to flourish, as he in turn made it his business to advance others coming up through the ranks. They included such later trade-union giants as Albert Shanker of the American Federation of Teachers and Thomas Donahue of the Service Employees International Union.

Kirkland's rise in the late 1960's coincided with the election of Richard Nixon, who had respect for big labor's power if not for its positions. As Puddington points out, Meany and Kirkland were outspoken critics of the Nixon policy of détente with the Soviet Union and, after 1971, of wage and price controls. Nevertheless, Nixon appointed Kirkland to a presidential commission studying private financing systems, where he served alongside a young New York investment banker named Alan Greenspan, and to the Rockefeller Commission on Critical Choices for America, formed, in Puddington's words, "at the height of a furor over the conduct of the Central Intelligence Agency." Another member of the Rockefeller commission was Governor Reagan of California.

The AFL-CIO stayed neutral in the 1972 presidential contest between Nixon and Senator George McGovern. Puddington attributes this to McGovern's isolationism, as well as, more generally, to his association with the



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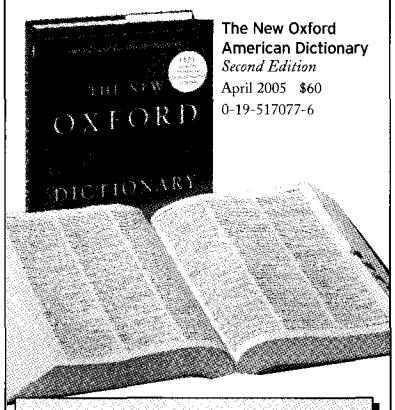

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project to transform the Democratic party from an institution that derived its strength from its blue-collar base to an entity in which "cause" liberals predominated and in which labor's agenda had given way to a program dictated by peace activists and advocates of feminism, the counterculture, gay liberation, and the limits-to-growth wing of the environmental movement.

Although Nixon maneuvered to swing labor behind the Republicans, Meany and Kirkland remained steadfastly neutral. Kirkland himself would end up on Nixon's enemies list, a point in which Puddington says he "took pride."

Four years later, the labor movement split over Democratic candidates for the presidency, though Kirkland and Meany personally supported Senator Henry M. "Scoop" Jackson. (The collapse of Jackson's campaign, in Puddington's judgment, signaled the "last gasp of cold-war liberalism as a factor in presidential politics.") In the election itself, labor supported Jimmy Carter. For the next four years, Kirkland threw himself into the fights for tariff protection and a higher minimum wage and for a tripartite national accord among labor, business, and government. Clearly, though he had lost touch with some of the deeper currents in the country that would result in the elevation of Reagan, he had not yet lost touch with labor's rank and file.

KIRKLAND WAS elected president of the AFL-CIO the year before Reagan was elected President of the United States. In the ensuing years, he battled Reagan on major matters, including the air-traffic controllers' strike and much of the President's economic policy. But, in an irony of history, it was also Reagan's accession that led to the vindication of Kirkland's own hard-line views on Soviet Communism and on the importance of promoting democracy.

As Puddington shows in some of his book's finest pages, Kirkland's record in piloting the AFL-CIO through the climactic years of the cold war displayed not only guts but a breathtaking, not to say Reaganesque, appreciation of the possibilities of American victory. His chosen instrument was the worldwide movement of free trade unions—that is, unions governed by their own members rather than by political parties or governments, Communist or otherwise. The movement was active in Central America, in Asia, in Africa, and most famously in Poland and Eastern Europe; it was when Kirkland was in Brussels for one of its international gatherings that I had my own introduction to him in 1984.

In telling this part of his story, Puddington brings on stage a whole cast of vivid personalities, from the AFL-CIO's hardline representative in Europe, Irving Brown, to Lech Walesa to Henry Kissinger to Boris Yeltsin, and recounts any number of memorable anecdotes. One of my favorites is of a meeting in Washington attended by Meany, Kirkland, and the former Soviet dissident Vladimir Bukovsky, who had been freed in 1976 in exchange for a Chilean Communist. The three men were discussing President Jimmy Carter's appointment of Paul Warnke to head the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Meany explained that Warnke was an arms-control enthusiast, who might favor cutbacks in American military spending even in the face of a Soviet buildup. To this, the incredulous Bukovsky responded that anyone holding such views "must either be a madman or a Soviet agent." Kirkland's rejoinder: "He's something in-between the two: an American liberal."

NOT THAT Kirkland's distance from Warnke's dovish brand of liberalism, or his long slog side by side with the Right against the Communists, ever made him a conservative, neo- or otherwise. Well into the Clinton years and indeed until his death in

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1999, Kirkland remained an avid supporter of minimum-wage hikes and trade protection. He was, in short, a liberal of the old-fashioned variety, staunchly anti-Communist and interventionist in foreign affairs but inveterately suspicious of bosses and capitalists at home. Besides, he had been through enough cold-war battles to see that the record of American big business was hardly free of blemishes when it came to dealing with Communists. He was especially fond of repeating a comment of Thomas Theobold, an executive at Citibank, who had reacted to the imposition of martial law in Poland by declaring, insouciantly, "Who knows what political system works best? All we ask is: Can they pay the bills?"

Kirkland's brand of liberalism may also explain why, once Eastern Europe was liberated, he was so disappointed by the avidity with which the newly free Communist lands turned to raw capitalism and the unfettered market. But there was a catch here, too. If he retained to the end his instincts for labor over capital, he was hardly blind to the drift taken by the new-fashioned American liberalism inaugurated by the McGovernites, whose preoccupation with "quality-of-life" issues and the discontents of the middle class had soon begun to infect the labor movement itself. As he once phrased it:

> I would put the problem of the man who does not have a job ahead of the problem of the man who does not like his work. I would put the problem of non-work ahead of the problem of the quality of work. I would put the problem of the aged poor ahead of the problem of the unhappy young. I would deal with the problems of the unemployed, the sick, the old, and the poor before I would become very obsessed with the problems of the young, the healthy, and the affluent.

In a final irony, the triumph of the new brand of American liberalism, in combination with the success of Solidarity in Poland and the collapse of the Soviet regime, helped generate a turbulence inside the U.S. labor movement that would lead to Kirkland's retirement in 1995. After a brief interlude in which Thomas Donahue served as his successor, the federation lurched leftward under John Sweeney, leaving the Democratic party with one fewer brake on its worst impulses. To read through Arch Puddington's wonderful book is thus to be reminded not only of one man's indispensable contribution to the democratic revolution now under way around the world, but of how far both the trade-union movement and the Democratic party have fallen in his absence.

Higher Learning

God on the Quad:
How Religious Colleges and the Missionary Generation Are Changing America

by Naomi Schaefer Riley

St Martin's. 288 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Mark C. Henrie

We have grown used to the notion that America is now a nation divided between two cultures—red and blue. But what do the colors stand for? Too often "blue" is taken to denote education and worldliness (European vacations, NPR, secularism) while "red" stands for ignorance and naive credulity (NASCAR, talk radio, megachurches). As the conventional wisdom would have it, one side is cultured, while the other has, in the anthropological sense, a culture—and a primitive one at that.

But what if our familiar understanding of this divide is mistaken, a case of comparing choice apples with common oranges—and only then finding the oranges wanting? After all, red America may have its quotient of fools and boors, but so too does blue America (just consider the *lumpenbobos* on display at any upscale Manhattan nightclub). A more arresting question is whether the converse is true. If blue America has its Ivy League and jet-setting business class, is there a genuinely "elite" cohort within America's red culture, too?

Naomi Schaefer Riley's *God on the Quad* is a sympathetic journalistic exploration of America's religious colleges. As she sees it, the "missionary generation" now emerging from these schools holds the potential for "changing America." That portentous claim seems mostly to be publisher's hype, but Riley is correct to observe that during the 1990's, while overall university enrollment remained flat, enrollment in the strongly evangelical schools affiliated with the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities shot up 60 percent. And though it is difficult to make generalizations about quality, it does appear that academic standards in religious higher education have also been improving. If red America has an elite of its own, we should expect to find it being cultivated here.

The first half of *God on the Quad* consists of in-depth reports on six schools that Riley visited. They cover a wide religious spectrum: the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, and Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula, California (Roman Catholic); Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina (Protestant fundamentalist); Baylor University in Waco, Texas (evangelical Baptist); Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah (Mormon); and Yeshiva

Mark C. Henrie, *a new contributor, is senior editor at the Intercollegiate Studies Institute.*

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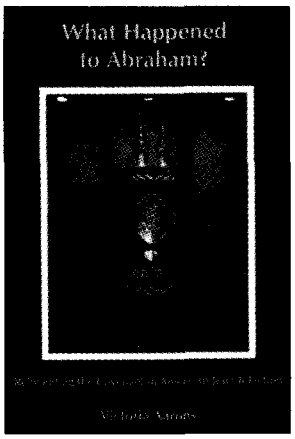

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University in Manhattan (Jewish).

In the second half of the book, Riley turns to general themes, making use of her experiences and interviews at these schools and some twenty others, including Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, the Harvard, or at least the Swarthmore, of the evangelicals; Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a Reformed rather than an evangelical institution with an extraordinary track record of producing first-rate philosophers; and Patrick Henry College in Purcellville, Virginia, a recently founded evangelical institution for students who have been homeschooled.

As a recent college graduate herself, Riley takes a special interest in the perennial issues of student life—sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. In contrast to most secular colleges, which long ago relinquished their role of standing in loco parentis, religious schools have retained a much more traditional understanding of their moral responsibilities. Even at Notre Dame, by far the most mainstream of the colleges Riley visited, all dorms are single-sex, and there are (admittedly generous) visiting hours. At tiny Thomas Aquinas College, public displays of affection are against the rules—the view being that romantic attachments distract from the common intellectual inquiry that is the heart of the school's great-books approach. Brigham Young bans all premarital sex, but Mormons encourage early marriage, and Riley describes a culture of "intense hand-holding." Bob Jones requires all dates to be chaperoned, but also provides a huge dating parlor for its students. On most of these campuses, a "ring by spring" remains both an aspiration and, often enough, a concrete reality.

In an age of casual sexual "hookups," all this may seem quaintly old-fashioned, but Riley reports that the students are fully aware of the customs of mainstream campuses, and what they know exerts little attraction. Far from rebelling against the parental and university strictures that regulate their private lives, the students whom Riley interviewed hold marriage and family in high regard, and believe that these matters do not simply take care of themselves. In their eyes, the easy-going "why not?" world of the baby-boomers has not worked; "progress" in that direction is a dead end. But rather than throwing up their hands in despair, they are struggling to put the cake of custom back together again. The social norms on their campuses support rather than frustrate their aspirations.

As for illegal drugs, these seem to be so small a problem that Riley barely mentions them. Instead she discusses alcohol use and abuse. Here the schools vary widely, from completely dry evangelical campuses like Bob Jones or Wheaton (which only recently lifted its ban on *faculty* smoking and drinking *off* campus) to Thomas Aquinas, where wine is sometimes served to students at evening events, or Notre Dame, whose football games would not be complete without bibulous tailgate parties.

There is similar diversity regarding popular culture. At Bob Jones, students may listen only to classical music, and at Thomas Aquinas, television is banned in the dorms. American evangelicalism, on the other hand, has made "Christian rock" a central element of its own counter-culture, and such music is prevalent on campus. At all of the schools, however, administrators hope that students will develop a critical distance from popular culture, and enforce rules meant to achieve that goal.

WHERE *God on the Quad* comes up short is in its relatively superficial treatment of the intellectual content of these schools' offerings. Riley devotes just one chapter to the subject, "The Classroom as Chapel," and much of that is given over to a discussion of success at graduate-

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school placements and to an indictment of the particular (and unrepresentative) deficiencies of Patrick Henry College. Throughout, she quotes far more from interviews with administrators and students than with faculty. Most obviously missing from her account are the important scholars—Mark Noll at Wheaton, Ralph McInerny and George Marsden at Notre Dame, David Jeffrey at Baylor, Ralph Hancock at BYU, and many others—who have written on religious higher education. All of these thinkers hark back in one way or another to the English churchman John Henry Newman (1801-90), whose enormously influential book, *The Idea of a University*, included an insistence on theology as a branch of universal knowledge. Riley, alas, is not interested in theology.

She does report the view of several professors that religious students are more "motivated" in their studies. For these young people, intellectual life is not a game, it is a quest for the truth—with no ironical scare quotes. Riley also relates the argument, deeply contrary to today's conventional wisdom, that radical intellectual diversity can be an impediment to learning: "When there is no common ground," one of her subjects says, "conversation tends to go nowhere." And she discusses the educational buzz phrases used at the various colleges—"the integration of faith and learning," *Fides et Ratio* (faith and reason), *Torah Umadda* (religious law and secular learning).

But because Riley seems to have no real feeling for the intellectual claims of faith, she does not quite grasp the problem of integrating reason and revelation in the academy. She remains wedded to modern liberal understandings of both the university and religion. For her, religion is a private "something extra" added "on top" of the public life of the mind. Yet religions necessarily make *public* claims, claims about what is significant, creditable, and just. Riley seems ill at ease with the possibility that the "integration of faith and learning" might transform public reason even more than it transforms private faith. This, I suspect, is why her book focuses on the human product of the religious schools—students who seem relatively more moral, service-oriented, and civically engaged than their secular peers—and provides only a fumbling account of the sophisticated critiques of the modern academy that have generated the very renaissance in religious higher education that she set out to explore.

Brian Anderson of the Manhattan Institute has recently used the term "South Park conservatives" to describe a generation of college students who see through liberal pieties (in the fashion of the vulgarly irreverent characters of TV's

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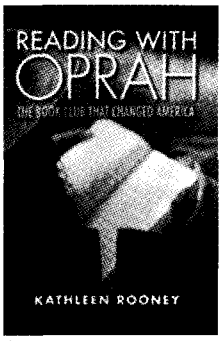

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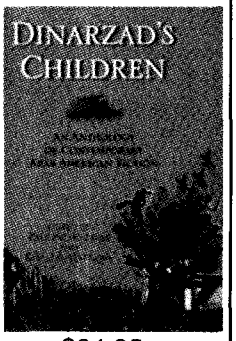

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South Park) but who are otherwise quite at home in popular culture and who hold liberal views on women's roles and on homosexuality. They are "hip" rather than "square," even as they enthusiastically support President Bush. The implication for blue America is that voting patterns aside, even conservative students are "just like us."

The students described by Naomi Schaefer Riley are not hip—but they are cultured, and in a way that affects not just their private morals and their relationship to popular culture but also their understanding of what public life demands. *God on the Quad* is a rich, carefully reported account of everyday life in this relatively unknown part of red America, but we still need an exploration of that growing culture's intellectual aims and achievements.

Left Behind

Politics and Passion: Toward a More Egalitarian Liberalism

by Michael Walzer

Yale. 208 pp. $25.00

Reviewed by
Adam Wolfson

LIBERAL POLITICAL theory today is in a state of crisis. It is divided into a dozen or so warring tribes, each vying to be more "transformative," cutting-edge, and multicultural than its competitors. In *Politics and Passion*, a collection of previously published essays, the left-wing political philosopher Michael Walzer has made his own entry into this thicket, arguing against many of Left-liberalism's leading academic lights (though only occasionally by name) while seeking to refine his own vision for America and the world.

Walzer is a lucid writer and a genuine public intellectual. His 1977 book, *Just and Unjust Wars*, almost single-handedly rescued serious thinking about the morality (and, yes, sometimes the necessity) of war in the wake of America's Vietnam debacle. More recently, in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, he wrote a bracing essay in *Dissent*, the magazine he co-edits, entitled "Can There Be a Decent Left?"

The answer was apparently no. Chastising his fellow leftists for their "barely concealed glee that the imperial state had finally gotten what it deserved," Walzer concluded sadly that "the Left has lost its bearings."

But Walzer is no liberal mugged by reality, as Irving Kristol once famously defined a neoconservative. In the six chapters that make up *Politics and Passion*, he gives vent to his misgivings about the Left and about various strands of contemporary academic liberalism. But, despite these misgivings, he remains a true believer in "social democracy"—in a politics that would actively promote multiculturalist and redistributionist policies through the coercive actions of the state.

WALZER BEGINS by making the sensible point that liberal society depends upon a variety of associations that in the strict sense are not really "voluntary." Whatever liberal theory might have to say about the "open society" and the "autonomous self," the sociological reality in which individuals actually dwell is quite different from such abstract categories. We are born into this or that family; we come into the world with a particular skin color, ethnicity, and sex; and we are raised from infancy into particular cultural and religious forms. We have no choice in any of these primordial associations; they are the "givens" of our lives.

Walzer is critical of postmodern theorists who ignore these rather obvious human facts in favor of the idea that they are mere "social constructions," which an individual need not accept unless he has in some active sense "chosen" them. Walzer aptly describes these theorists as "entrepreneurs of the self," and, in good Burkean fashion, he dismisses their radical enterprise as utopian. It is, he reminds us, the given "constraints" of family, ethnicity, class, sex, and so forth, that make individual choice both humanly meaningful and possible in the first place.

Walzer's sensible appreciation of the significance of involuntary associations leads him, however, down a very un-Burkean path. As the subtitle of his book declares, he aims at "a more egalitarian liberalism." In his view, neither the classical liberal solution to the problems of the down-and-out—a solution based mainly on individual effort—nor its class-based alternative has produced more than limited improvement. Needed instead, he contends, is a kind of marriage between multiculturalism and socialism, or what he calls "meat-and-potatoes multiculturalism." He would help the underprivileged not one-by-one, and not as a class, and not by extending to marginalized groups the mere social "recognition" emphasized by many of his fellow leftists. He would offer them group-based, taxpayer-supported subsidies.

BUT, HAVING committed himself to redistributing society's resources to designated downtrodden associations, Walzer finds himself in an awkward position. The hate-preachers of the *madrassas* are part of civil society, too, no matter how uncivilized they are, and they too will demand their subsidy and their place in the sun. Walzer does not blink at the prospect, even as he notes that any "regime of toleration" is unlikely to survive "if a single totalizing group [becomes] de-

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mographically dominant." Nevertheless, he writes, there is a strong argument "in favor of tolerating such [totalizing] groups, even in favor of empowering them and providing some (qualified and conditional) support for their cultural reproduction."

Thankfully, Walzer does not completely go over this precipice. After considerable hand-wringing and complex theorizing, he suggests that government can and indeed should "tilt" *against* such anti-liberal groups. But it should do so, he stipulates, not in the name of the old liberal creed—no tolerance for the intolerant—for that would itself be excessively intolerant. It should do so simply in the name of basic "decency."

Finally, as in his domestic politics, Walzer also favors a global form of meat-and-potatoes multiculturalism. What is needed, in his view, are strong regulatory structures to oversee a redistribution of resources from the haves to the have-nots—from, one supposes, the United States and other rich, Western nations, to the disadvantaged and stigmatized nations of the Third World.

As *Politics and Passion* winds down, Walzer mildly rebukes other excesses to be found in contemporary academic liberalism. Rejecting a current scholarly fad that views "rational deliberation"—conveniently defined by liberal academics to exclude conservative opinion—as the only form of acceptable democratic politics, he advocates making room as well for a passionate politics—or at least a passionate commitment to equality. Similarly, he dismisses a form of liberal cosmopolitanism that looks down on patriotism or the attachment to one's own. Although he shares the One World goal of liberal cosmopolitanism, he points out that people must first "have an opportunity to be, and they must learn to be, competent citizens of a particular state."

What is one to make of this exercise? Certainly, Walzer scores many points against the various leftist factions he contends with, from the postmodern liberalism of utopian "self-creation" to the hollow and strident radicalism of identity multiculturalism to the foolishness of an ultra-liberal rationalism and cosmopolitanism. Yet is his meat-and-potatoes multiculturalism any better?

There is no evidence that state subsidies of so-called marginalized groups would help either the individuals in these groups or the groups as a whole. Far more likely is it that their self-appointed leaders would grow rich and corrupt. And who would decide which groups are deserving of taxpayer support? How is such support to be administered? What sorts of perverse social and political incentives would thereby be set in motion?

Of course, Walzer's book is a work of theory, not a how-to guide. But it is one more sign of the malaise of academic liberalism that even a critic of it should be so out of touch with the realities of American life. Walzer claims to speak for democracy, but the American public would never approve of his ideas and programs; nor, even, would today's Democratic party.

Walzer's book fails on theoretical grounds as well. As we have seen, having endorsed subsidies for marginalized groups in the name of values like "cultural reproduction" and the toleration of "difference," he simultaneously advocates that government "tilt" against illiberal, totalizing groups "for the sake of a minimalist decency." But in the government-funded world Walzer would bring into being, who is to do the delicate moral balancing he calls for? The *madrassa* cleric will surely retort: "It is not for you, Mr. Walzer—decadent Ivy League professor and Zionist swine that you are—to tell me what is decent and indecent." What we have here, in short, is another case study in how a leftist politics of multiculturalism inevitably ends up supporting violently intolerant opinions and radically illiberal forms.

In his post-9/11 *cri de coeur* in *Dissent*, Walzer concluded that "the Left needs to begin again." It surely does, and for a brief period he seemed the man to point the way. Unfortunately, on the evidence of the theoretical hair-splittings and preposterous proposals of *Politics and Passion*, Walzer has himself hardly begun anew, but walked into a cul-de-sac.

Scorched Earth

Collapse:
How Societies Choose
to Fail or Succeed

By Jared Diamond

Viking. 575 pp. $29.95

Reviewed by
Kevin Shapiro

When the ancient Greeks happened upon ruins whose origins they could not fathom, they called them "Hebrews' castles"—a nod to the Hebrew Bible as the oldest available source of recorded history. In reality, the sites belonged not to the Hebrews but to earlier Aegean societies like the Myceneans and the Minoans. Regional powers in their day, those societies had disappeared, leaving the Greeks to wonder about their fate. Were they conquered or enslaved, stricken by plague or by famine, by earthquake or by flood?

Even today, the desolate places of the world are littered with "Hebrews' castles." We gaze in wonder at, among others, the Anasazi pueb-

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los of the American Southwest (Anasazi being the Navajo word for "the ancients"), the monumental statues of Easter Island, and the grand cities of the Maya entombed in the Yucatán jungle. Aided by the tools of modern archaeology, from the analysis of midden heaps and pollen grains to radiocarbon dating and even more sophisticated physical methods, we often are able to know a good deal about the people responsible for these artifacts. In some cases, like that of the long-deserted Viking settlement in Greenland, detailed written records exist alongside the stone shells of churches, barns, and great houses.

But none of the records, written or material, speaks directly of the final moments of their authors. We are left, like the Greeks, to puzzle over the reasons these castles were abandoned, what became of their erstwhile inhabitants—and whether a similar fate might one day befall us.

THIS PUZZLE is Jared Diamond's subject in *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. In his best-known previous book, *Guns, Germs, and Steel* (1997), Diamond—a physiologist by training and a professor of geography at UCLA—sought to explain why the peoples of Europe succeeded in outpacing all others in technology and exploration, leaving their mark on the entire modern world. In *Collapse*, he turns his attention to the opposite extreme: societies that appear to have experienced spectacular crashes. His thesis is that collapse is a consequence of "ecocide"—environmental damage caused by deforestation, intensive agriculture, and the destruction of local flora and fauna.

Diamond begins by considering the land and people of Montana, often regarded as one of the few remaining unspoiled corners of the United States. As he tells it, however, Montana is in fact a microcosm of collapse, or at least of major social change, driven by environmental problems. Logging and mining, the traditional pillars of the economy, have declined as the state has become increasingly deforested and polluted. Soil that once supported apple orchards is nearly gone, and so are the glaciers for which Montana is famous. At the same time, a burgeoning population in the Blackfoot Valley has put a strain on the state's water supply and job market.

Although environmental damage is a nearly ubiquitous corollary of human activity, what makes certain societies vulnerable to ecocide, Diamond argues, is the combination of particularly fragile ecosystems with particularly destructive land-use practices. Like Montana, societies that have collapsed in the past have been situated in areas marginal for agriculture, with climates unfavorable to farming and tree growth.

On both Easter Island and Greenland, for example, trees grow slowly and topsoil is relatively poor; their former inhabitants cut down the available trees without realizing, apparently, that more would not soon grow to replace them. Similarly, the Anasazi of Chaco Canyon (in present-day New Mexico) prospered in wet years by employing innovative methods of irrigation, but they grew so numerous that they could not sustain their population in years of drought.

What might such societies have done differently, and how have societies in similar straits managed to survive? The key, Diamond finds in each case, is successful adaptation to the fragility of the local environment. The Inuit of Greenland subsist on fish, whales, and seals, at least some of which are present even in periods of cold. The Japanese, who came perilously close to deforestation in the 17th century, instituted a strict system of tree man-

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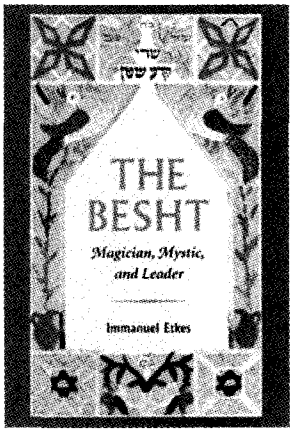

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agement under the early Tokugawa shoguns, regulating the use of literally every tree on the main islands of Honshu, Kyushu, and Shikoku. Most radical of all were the measures taken by the inhabitants of Tikopia Island in the Pacific, who planted every inch of their land with edible trees and roots, eliminated their pigs, and adopted stringent population controls, including abortion and infanticide. All of these successful societies recognized the dangers they were about to face, Diamond argues, and changed their behavior accordingly.

Collapse provides a series of such vignettes, rendered in meticulous detail. Although Diamond admits to having set out with the notion that all collapses are brought about by ecocide alone, he recognized early on that this was never the whole story. The Easter Islanders, for example, may have denuded their homeland of palm trees and depleted its fisheries, but their problems were compounded by the rivalries of competing tribal chieftains, who sought to outdo each other by erecting more and bigger statues, thus consuming enormous quantities of wood and food. The Tikopians, by contrast, have a history of weak chiefs and little internecine competition.

Still, despite Diamond's repeated bows to the complex interaction of such other factors as history, political economy, and social structure, it is clear that, to his mind, the overriding cause of social collapse remains ecocide, which he also considers the major threat to the survival of civilization on earth today. Indeed, contemporary tales of social change brought about by ecological damage bracket his discussion of the past and constitute the larger portion of the book.

Diamond portrays the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, for example, as a classic Malthusian crisis: too many people, too little food and land. Tensions between Hutus and Tutsis were real, to be sure, and were exploited by Rwandan politicians for their own purposes. But Diamond believes that the scale of the bloodbath can only be explained by the inability of Rwandans to support themselves on small farms. Haiti offers a similar cautionary story, having long been the basketcase of the Western hemisphere because of almost total deforestation and agricultural insufficiency.

Diamond sees the early stages of ecological collapse in two larger nations as well—where he also finds signs of hope. China faces problems of soil erosion, desertification, urbanization, and rapid industrialization, all of which contribute to rapid ecological destruction and the overuse of resources. But the Chinese have taken steps to preserve their remaining forests and to limit their population. In Australia, the

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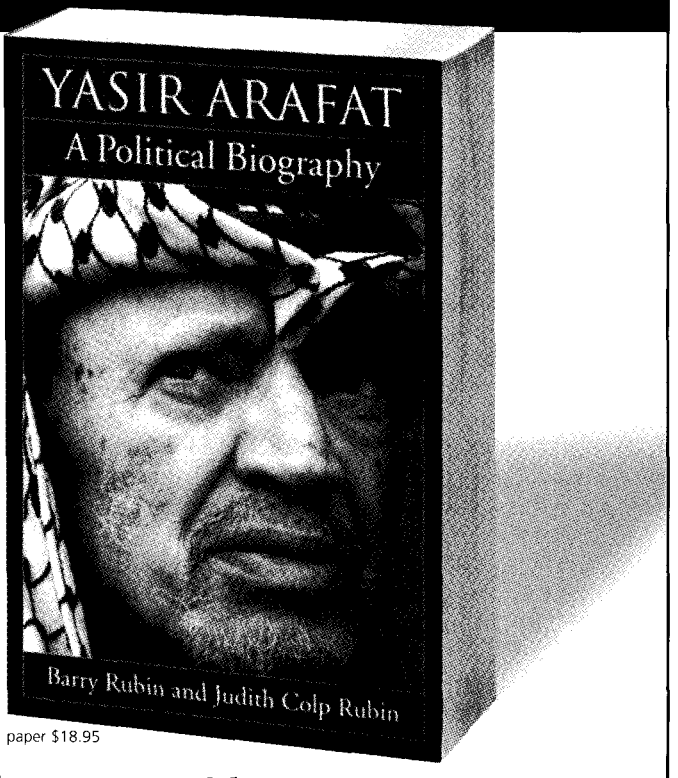

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government is rethinking its historic support for industries like sheep-herding and wheat cultivation—both poorly suited to Australia's ecosystem—and is embarking on projects to restore the continent's native flora and manage its scarce water supplies. Such reforms suggest to Diamond that some of us may yet be able to save ourselves from the fate of the Easter Islanders.

Collapse IS not light reading. Each of Diamond's vignettes is laden with facts and statistics—in one paragraph, for example, he lists the common and scientific names of fourteen different plants harvested by the Tikopians, followed by a description of the agronomy of Tikopian swamps. Such dry fare is not made easier to digest by the prose style, which tends to be ponderous and repetitive. All the same, *Collapse* is an impressively researched and keenly argued book.

The fatal weakness of *Collapse* is Diamond's constant overreaching. In trying to apply the lessons of the past to the present, he wanders down several paths with no obvious connection to the main point of the book. His opening section on Montana, for instance, is interesting in its own right, but the problems faced by Montanans are similar only superficially to the problems that were faced by Easter Islanders or Mayans. The fact that Montana's traditional industries have turned out to be unprofitable and impractical is perhaps unfortunate for long-time residents, but it hardly seems to qualify as a historic catastrophe.

Other applications of Diamond's thesis to the modern world are even more far-fetched. He repeatedly alludes to the dangers of globalization, suggesting that it makes the entire planet more vulnerable to the collapse of a single nation. This might be a reasonable conjecture in the short term, but in the long term it seems more likely that globalization would act to insulate the world from such collapse, since resources that formerly would have had to be provided by a single country could now eventually be supplied by another.

The unstated premise of *Collapse* seems to be that the entire planet is headed for a Malthusian crisis, which can be staved off only by extreme measures like China's one-child policy. But is this view defensible? Diamond takes no note of the extraordinary increases in food production achieved in recent decades; nor does he consider the likelihood that crises in places like Rwanda owe more to poor land management than to a shortage of farmland as such.

As for the population controls Diamond seems to endorse, he says nothing about their unhappy practical consequences—including the sort of intensive urban development he decries—let alone their questionability on moral grounds. Indeed, as *Collapse* progresses, Diamond's arguments grow increasingly one-sided. The entire final chapter is a discursive screed on the need for urgent environmental action, accompanied by a series of rather unconvincing potshots at those who are skeptical of such measures.

To his credit, Diamond takes pains to avoid what he rightly calls "environmental determinism." But although he recognizes the role played by social and cultural factors, he does not seem to appreciate how such recognition serves again and again to undermine his emphasis on ecocide, making his thesis seem arbitrary, if not ideologically motivated. For many of the societies Diamond discusses, it is not even clear that environmental damage was a major determinant of collapse.

Thus, the Vikings certainly were not helped in the long run by the rapid deforestation of Greenland, or by their concerted effort to maintain cattle in the face of unfavorable local conditions. But they were probably hurt even more by their rigid customs, which apparently included the avoidance of fish (as Diamond reports, fish bones are almost never found in their middens). Diamond himself notes that the inhabitants of Iceland, who faced similar problems, managed to survive by switching from an agrarian economy to one based on the production and export of salted cod. Their brethren on Greenland might have survived by similar means, if only they had eaten fish.

A PROMINENT theme of *Collapse*, but one which Diamond almost completely ignores, is that societies tend to do best if their decision-making is open and democratic. Many societies that failed—like Easter Island and the Mayan empire—were ruled by elites more concerned with self-aggrandizement than with the stewardship of natural resources for the common good. The Vikings maintained economically ruinous subsidies for cattle farms to serve the needs of rich landlords and foreign-born bishops. Societies that succeeded, by contrast, were often governed by some form of representative democracy. To this day Iceland has the world's oldest legislative body, and the Tikopian "government" (if one can call it that) resembles a condo association.

Diamond cites these as examples of "bottom-up" management, but he also praises "top-down" successes, like Tokugawa Japan. Centralized rule, however, has been responsible for many of the worst ecological disasters of modern times, as in the industrial wastelands of the former Soviet Union and Eastern bloc. Judging from Diamond's examples of successful bottom-up societies, and of corporations that have found it in their financial interest to adopt ecologically friendly policies, our best course of action is the one exemplified by the state of Montana: governance at the local level based on democratic values and economic realities. It is, in other words, the course we are already following.

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Variety and Vulnerability in American Party Politics

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The 2004 election's map of blue coasts and red hinterland proclaims two distinct Americas. But this gives a false impression of unity within the contending camps.

Disagreement among conservatives in the United States is acute about which beliefs, practices, and institutions are essential and which are most in danger of being lost or degraded. Social conservatives are anxious to constrain America's larger liberalism by protecting traditional morality from the corrosive effects of untrammeled personal freedom and the disruptions of a healthy, churning economy. In contrast, libertarians seek to preserve the legal framework within which personal freedom can be enjoyed and the market can operate most efficiently. Neoconservatives—typically more at home with liberalism than social conservatives and more at ease with traditional morality than libertarians—are committed to protecting America's liberalism from its own excesses by preserving habits of heart and mind that support freedom.

To command a national majority, the Republican Party requires the support of all three kinds of conservatives. But the fault lines in the coalition run deep. Social conservatives view abortion as an evil and oppose same-sex marriage as a threat to an institution they regard as central to civilized life. Libertarians, at least early in pregnancy, would leave the decision of whether to terminate a pregnancy to the mother and prefer government to stay out of the marriage business. Neoconservatives support an ambitious and idealistic foreign policy, with its hallmark the promotion of democracy abroad. Social conservatives, worried about the reach of liberalism at home, are skeptical both about liberalism's appeal abroad and about the United States' interest in promoting it. Furthermore, libertarians oppose the growth of government spending—even as social conservatives want to increase spending on domestic programs to shore up traditional values and neoconservatives want to increase spending on military and foreign aid.

Serious fault lines also run beneath the progressive camp. United by the priority they give to making America a more equal and inclusive society, progressives divide over the role that government, market mechanisms, courts, and the institutions of civil society should play in achieving it. Perhaps the most ominous tension within the progressive coalition arises from the conflicting economic interests of the party's two main constituencies. Once the party of the working class, today's Democratic Party is increasingly divided between highly educated, upper-middle-class professionals, who identify with its secular social and cultural outlook, and the poor, the sick, and the elderly, who want the party to increase government assistance.

Both parties face formidable challenges in keeping their vulnerable coalitions together while reaching out to centrists to assemble a national majority. The spectacle is enough to inspire in an old-fashioned liberal—one who follows John Stuart Mill in believing that liberty depends on a robust contest between a party that makes conserving a priority and a party that makes progress a priority—pride in American democracy and hope for the future.

—Peter Berkowitz

Peter Berkowitz is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution; associate professor of law at George Mason University Law School; and editor of Varieties of Conservatism in America *and* Varieties of Progressivism in America, *companion volumes published by the Hoover Press.*

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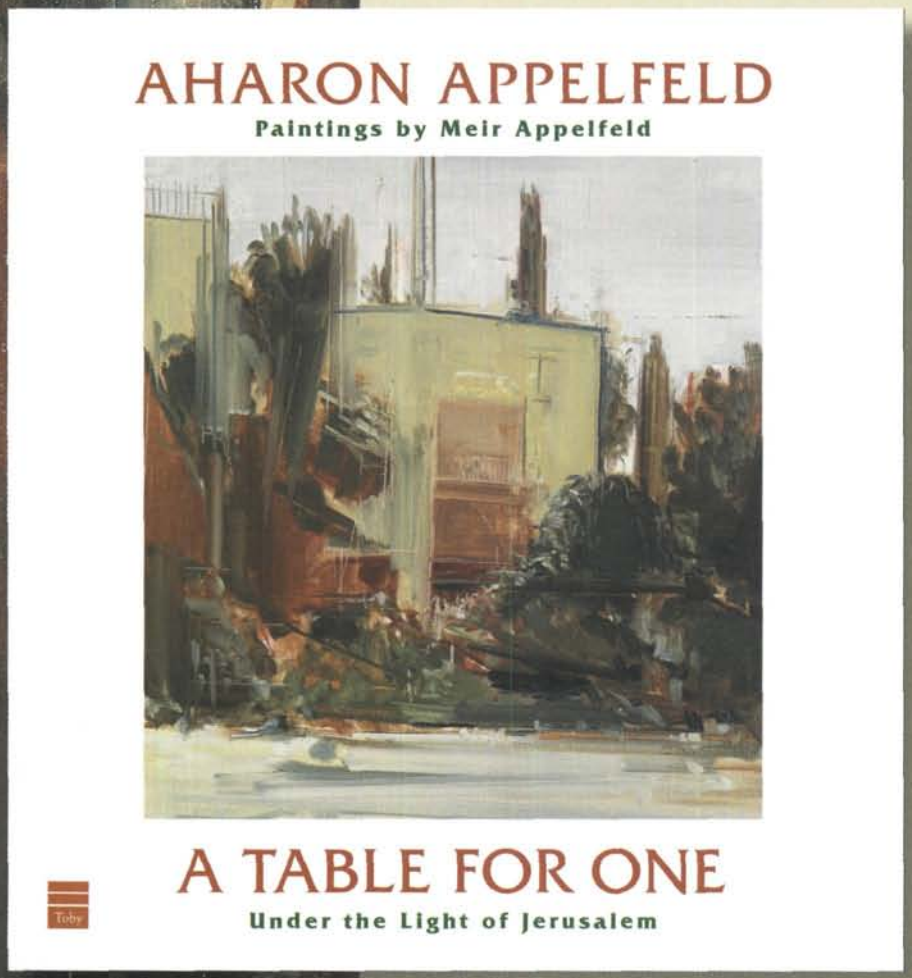

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